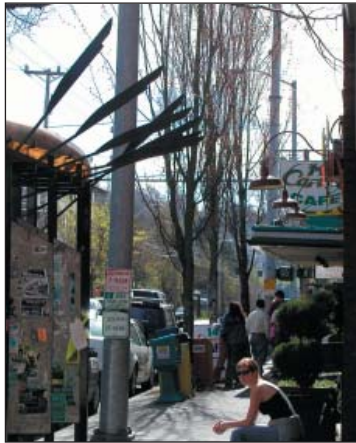


# Neighborhood Business District Strategy

*Proposed Land Use Code Amendments*

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## Director's Report:

**Land Use Code  
Changes**



# Acknowledgements

## Advisory Committee

W. Randy Bannecker  
Paul Bascomb  
Lynn Claudon  
Charlie Conner  
Carol Eychaner  
Jim Ferris  
Bruce Lorig  
Melody McCutcheon  
Michael McGinn  
Denny Onslow  
John Owen  
Joe Quintana  
Andrew Taylor  
Val Thomas  
Judy Tucker

## Staff

Diane Sugimura, DPD Director  
John Rahaim, DPD City Planning Director  
John Skelton, DPD Land Use Policy Manager

Jory Phillips, DPD Project Manager  
Lish Whitson, DPD Project Manager  
Mary Catherine Snyder, SDOT Parking Lead  
Michael Hintze, DPD Intern  
Katie Sheehy, DPD Intern

## Environmental Consultants

Adolfson Associates, Inc.  
Heffron Transportation, Inc.  
Property Counselors

## Interdepartmental Team

Dave Boyd, DON  
Lyle Bicknell, DPD  
Gordon Clowers, DPD  
Roque DeHererra, DPD  
Tom Hauger, DPD  
Rebecca Herzfeld, DON/Council Central Staff  
Barbara Gray, SDOT  
Margaret Klockars, Land Use Law Manager  
Andy McKim, DPD  
Susan McLain, DPD  
Dennis Meier, DPD  
Bob Morgan, Council Central Staff  
Alan Oiye, DPD  
Karen Tsao, Fleets & Facilities  
Mark Troxel, DPD  
Barbara Wilson, Seattle Planning Commission  
Nancy Yamamoto, OED

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# Neighborhood Business District Strategy

*Proposed Land Use Code Amendments*

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## Executive Summary



# Neighborhood Business District Strategy



## Key Recommendations

- Apply pedestrian overlays to commercial cores of neighborhood business districts.
- Remove unnecessary obstacles to housing development in commercial areas.
- Strengthen the pedestrian-orientation of commercial street fronts through development standards and guidelines.
- Refine and simplify use and maximum size of business standards.
- Revise requirements for residential amenities (open space).
- Control building bulk with floor area ratios to encourage wider sidewalks, plazas, ground-level open spaces, or view corridors.
- Lower parking requirements based on demand and to support alternative transportation.
- In Urban Centers and high capacity transit station areas, allow the market rather than the code to determine appropriate parking supply.
- Simplify the City's regulations so they are easier to understand.

## Why a Strategy for Neighborhood Business Districts?

Seattle is a city of neighborhoods. A neighborhood's business district provides neighborhood identity and a place for goods and services to be exchanged, as well as a neighborhood meeting place. Seattle's neighborhood business districts are anticipated to accept much of the city's future growth and development.

Seattle's zoning for neighborhood commercial areas has been in place for almost 20 years. In ensuing years, the City has adopted a Comprehensive Plan detailing a growth management strategy for the future based on development of urban villages. Neighborhood plans have been developed for each of these urban villages. Finally, design review was implemented to help ensure that new development fits with a neighborhood's character.



To advance Seattle's urban village strategy and the goals of the plans and policies that have been adopted, the Mayor asked the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to develop a Neighborhood Business District Strategy. The focus of the proposed strategy is to:

- Support job creation and business vitality
- Protect and enhance neighborhood character
- Improve the pedestrian environment
- Provide for housing growth in neighborhood business districts
- Achieve quality design through development flexibility
- Support transit connections
- Balance parking needs
- Make the Land Use Code easier to use

The Mayor's recommendations have been informed by the participation of many individuals and groups who have attended public forums, written letters, and participated in focus groups, advisory committee meetings and workshops.

#### WHAT THE NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT STRATEGY DOES NOT DO

- Does not rezone residential or industrial zones
- Does not include significant changes to height, bulk, or anticipated development densities.
- Does not change the primary role of commercial areas as places where business is conducted and goods and services are provided.
- Does not change zoned height limits.
- Does not change setbacks from residentially-zoned land.
- Does not change standards governing noise, odor, light, or glare.



# Pedestrian Environment



*Local businesses thrive when pedestrians are able to move easily among stores and services.*



*Where commercial demand is low, residential streetfronts can add interest, variety, and more customers.*

## Pedestrian Designation

All of Seattle's neighborhood plans envision walkable neighborhood business districts. To encourage compact, pedestrian-oriented centers, the Neighborhood Business District Strategy emphasizes and expands current pedestrian zone designations.

A single Pedestrian designation is proposed to replace the two pedestrian zones in place now. The Pedestrian designation will define pedestrian-oriented commercial areas. A broader range of street-level commercial uses that are compatible with and complement traditional retail sales and service is proposed to be allowed.

## Allow Residential Use Along Some Streetfronts

In many commercial areas, residential uses will be allowed along the street outside of a pedestrian designation. In smaller NCI zones, commercial uses will be required along arterials and residential uses will be allowed on sidestreets at the street level. In C2 zones residential uses will continue to require conditional use approval due to potential conflicts between residents and heavy commercial uses.

Well-designed residential development at the street can enhance the pedestrian experience, create distinctive urban neighborhoods, and provide the customers necessary for new and thriving business enterprises. Encouraging more housing within these areas also helps to meet the City's growth management objectives and reduces reliance on automobiles, contributing to efforts to reduce congestion and air pollution in the city.





*Requiring too much commercial space may increase the likelihood of vacant storefronts. The commercial streetfront of this mixed-use development has been vacant for over a year.*



*Well-designed streetfronts are an important component of neighborhood business districts.*



## Pedestrian Recommendations

- Adopt one pedestrian designation (current pedestrian 1 and pedestrian 2 designations will be re-designated “pedestrian”).
- Make pedestrian designation facade and parking location requirements standard in all NC zones.
- Broaden the range of uses that qualify for street-level use in pedestrian designated areas to include community centers, hotels, medical services, and parks.
- Revise criteria for establishing NC zones and pedestrian-designated areas to allow future rezones of areas that are currently more auto-oriented.
- Designate and expand pedestrian designated areas initially in six neighborhoods (Admiral, Columbia City, Eastlake, Greenwood, Lake City and Madison/Miller). Other neighborhood business districts will be evaluated in 2005.

# Mapping Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Cores

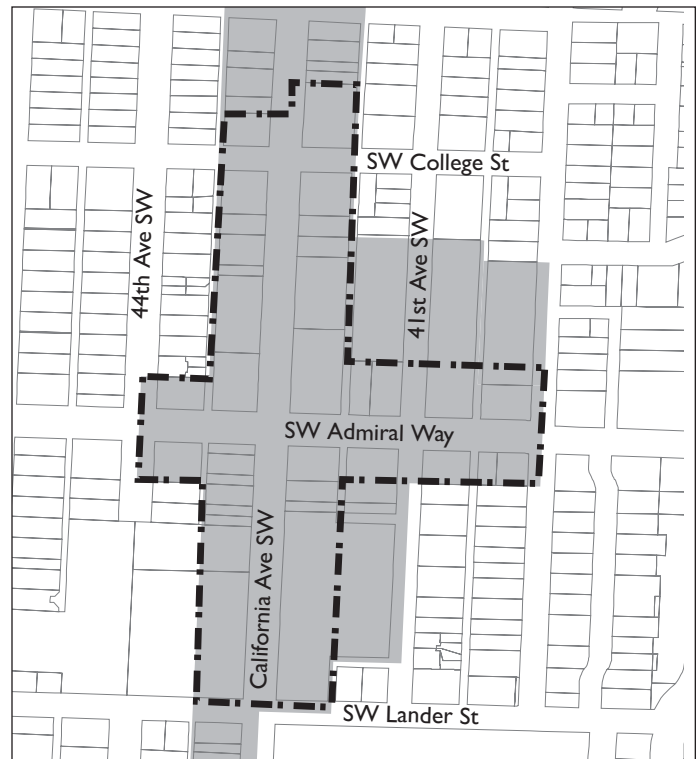


Pedestrian designations are proposed to be established or expanded in six business districts initially. The districts include Admiral, Eastlake, Madison-Miller, Columbia City, Greenwood/Phinney Ridge, and Lake City. Among these, the last three already have pedestrian designations established.

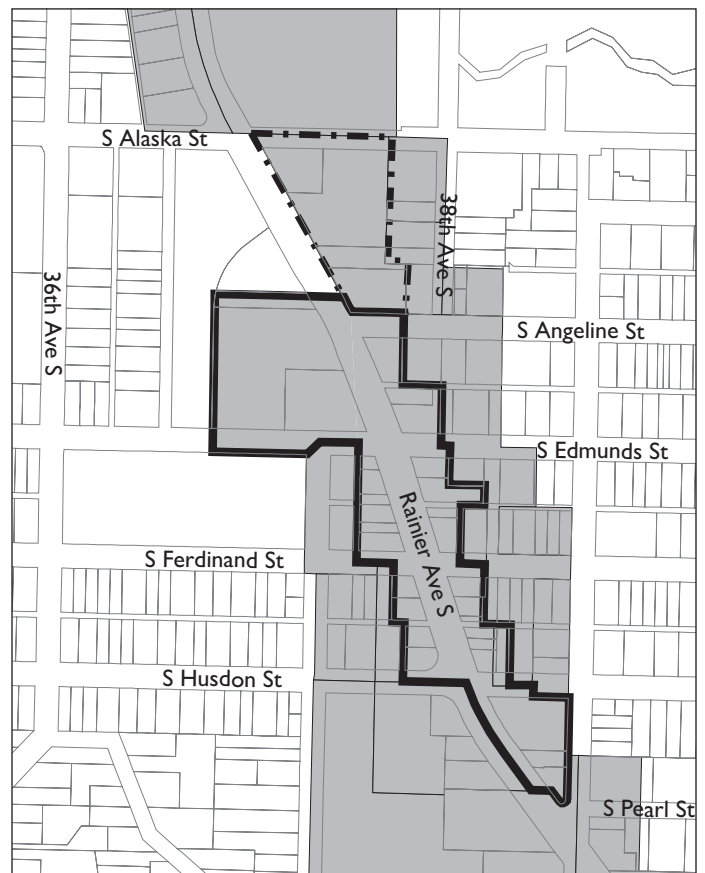
To inform the proposed mapping of pedestrian designations, DPD inventoried uses, vacancies, and streetscape conditions. Public meetings were held in the respective communities to discuss the proposed changes with residents, business and property owners.

Participants' biggest concern in the meetings was the amount of parking waiver that the proposed pedestrian designation would allow street-level businesses. Based on public comments, the Mayor's recommendation reduces the amount of parking waiver allowed.

DPD will examine and work with other neighborhoods throughout 2005 and 2006.



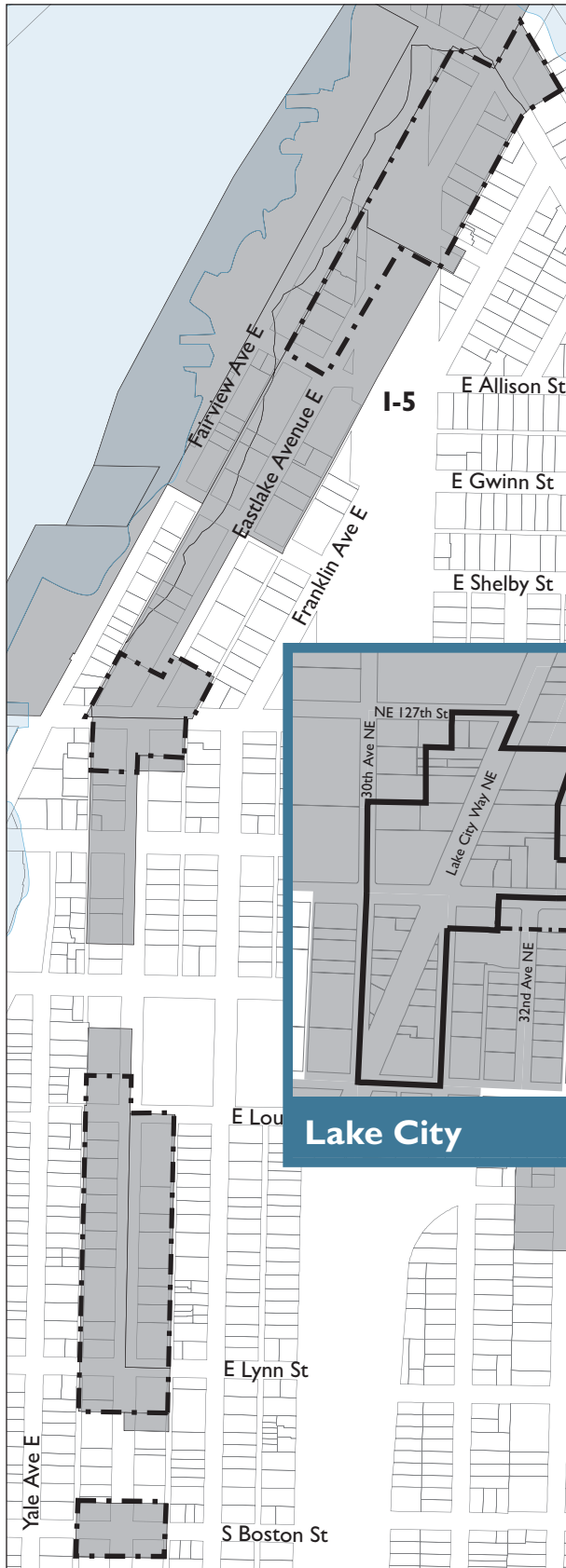
**Admiral**



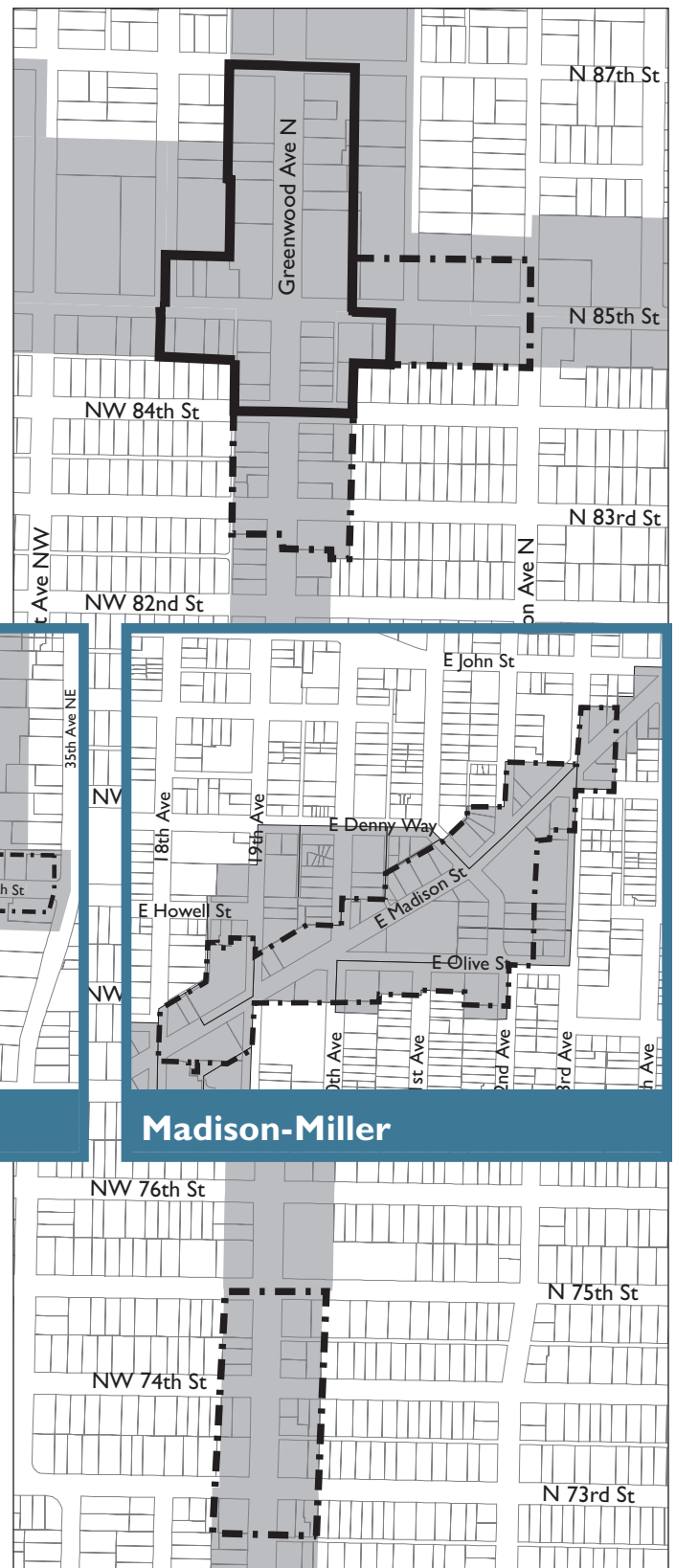
**Columbia City**

## Key

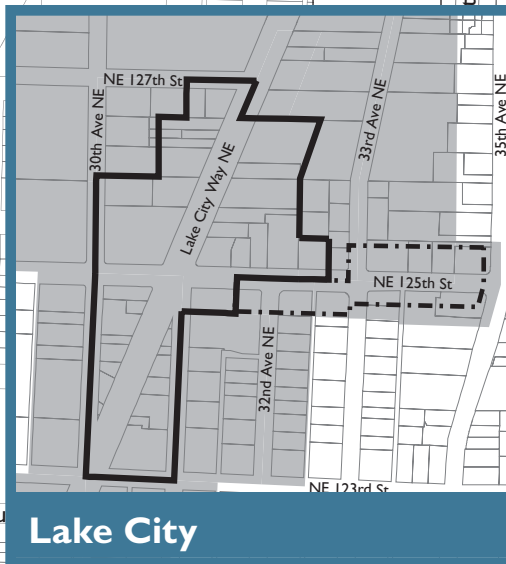
- Commercial Zoning
- Existing Pedestrian Designated Areas
- Proposed Expanded Pedestrian Designated Area



**Eastlake**



**Greenwood/Phinney**



**Lake City**



**Madison-Miller**



# Street-Front Standards & Guidelines



New design guidelines will encourage environments conducive to activity along streetfronts in business districts.

New streetfront standards will require transparency for commercial uses in all Neighborhood Commercial zones.



Development standards help define building forms and density. Wider sidewalks, overhead weather protection, street trees, seating, and pedestrian-scaled light fixtures also help to shape the character of business districts.

New guidelines and standards are proposed to help both residential and commercial development contribute positively to the pedestrian environment.

Seattle's design guidelines address the street-front. They include recommendations on appropriate storefront architectural details, ways to emphasize residential unit identity, and the appropriate location and access of parking, among others.

Development standards for the streetfront include requirements that limit blank facades, require windows, and require parking to be inside, behind, or beside buildings. New standards for residential streetfronts will further limit blank facades and require pedestrian-oriented entrances.

## Streetfront Recommendations

- Limit the setback of buildings from the sidewalk.
- Prohibit parking between a building and the street and at corners.
- Reduce blank walls along the pedestrian street.
- Maintain minimum commercial space standards to help viability of businesses.
- Limit the number of driveways across sidewalks.
- Encourage the appearance of multiple storefronts with revised street-front design guidelines.
- Allow departures through Design Review for visually prominent residential entrances, such as "grand stairways" or stoops.
- In auto-oriented areas, require pedestrian pathways from adjacent sidewalks, through parking lots, to a retail establishment.



Medical services are proposed to be added to the list of uses allowed along pedestrian-designated streets.



Changes are proposed to make it easier for new businesses to start up in new mixed-use buildings and in existing buildings.

Over 115 different uses are currently regulated in the Land Use Code. The list of uses is proposed to be consolidated into broader use categories, distinguished by the nature of their impacts.

Currently, the City limits the size of many businesses in NC zones to ensure a pedestrian scale and function. In all zones, expansion is allowed for established businesses. There are fewer limits in NC3 zones and there are generally no size of use limitations in the auto-oriented C1 and C2 zones. However, office uses are limited in C1 and C2 zones to encourage their location in areas with better pedestrian, transit and bicycle access.

To support small businesses and the vitality of commercial areas, business size limitations for new businesses are proposed to be revised to reflect existing business sizes. This maintains the relative scale of neighborhood commercial areas, while acknowledging the need for flexibility in how existing spaces can be occupied.

To help limit storefront vacancies and provide a timely change of use process, the Neighborhood Business District Strategy proposes that up to 20 spaces of parking be waived for a new business locating in an existing building.

## Use Recommendations

- Consolidate the list of uses. Distinguish uses only to the extent needed due to impacts or activities associated with the use.
- Simplify size of use limitations in neighborhood commercial zones without allowing larger uses than allowed for existing businesses today.
- Allow more flexibility when a new use locates in an existing structure that doesn't meet current code requirements:
  - ♦ Waive parking up to 20 spaces.
  - ♦ No longer require structural changes to meet mixed use standards under certain circumstances when adding residential units to existing commercial buildings.



# Height, Bulk and Density Standards



Bulk is the perceived volume of a building. Density is the number of units divided by a unit of land measurement. FAR regulates both.



FAR, in tandem with design guidelines, can encourage wider sidewalks in appropriate places.

## Height, Bulk and Density Standards

In neighborhood business districts, the scale of development is generally governed by the size of the lot and the height of buildings. Height limits vary among zones and are independent of the zone classification, while other standards apply more uniformly.

### Height

In commercial zones, height is generally governed by the zoned height limit. Under the existing code, additional height is permitted in 30- and 40-foot height limits to accommodate better designed street-level retail spaces. In such cases, additional height up to a maximum of seven feet (7 ft) is allowed when the number of stories a building contains or the density of the building that results is no more than that anticipated under the height limit (e.g. 3 stories in 30 ft, or 4 stories in 40 ft).

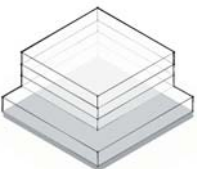
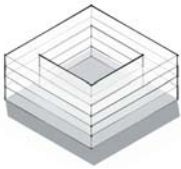
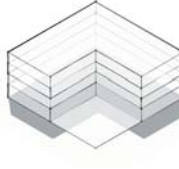
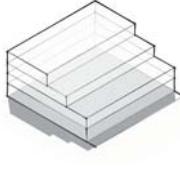
In these lower height areas, allowing a 4-foot height increase to accommodate street-level residential units that are offset from the sidewalk is proposed. This small increase will help create better designed residential streetfronts and protect the privacy of residents without increasing density.

### Bulk

For mixed-use buildings, bulk is currently governed by a lot coverage limit of 64 percent for the portion of the building above the street level containing residential units. Commercial buildings containing no residential uses may cover the full area of a commercial lot when not located next to a residential zone. This requirement is only modifiable through design review.

For consistency, a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is recommended for all uses to regulate bulk and density. FAR offers more design flexibility. It could help encourage wider sidewalks, plazas and open space, and room for pedestrian amenities such as sidewalk cafes and outdoor sales, creating a more informal and comfortable pedestrian experience. Base FARs would result in a size of development that is generally equivalent to that allowed under the current regulations.



Allowed by Existing Code		Not Allowed by Existing Code, but Allowed by Proposed Code	
			
Typical building form: podium above lot line-to-lot line first floor	Interior courtyard with exterior walls built to the lot line	Ground level plaza with upper stories covering more than 64% of lot	Terraced upper floors with any one upper floor covering more than 64% of lot

## Density

Currently, residential-only buildings are subject to density limitations while mixed-use buildings are not. This was intended to encourage mixed-use buildings. However, the incentive to build substantially more residential units in a mixed-use building has resulted in an amount of commercial space that is not often sustainable by the market. Identifying where non-residential uses will be required at street level (see page 6), and treating residential-only buildings the same as mixed-use buildings in terms of density, eliminates the incentive to build commercial spaces where they may be ill-advised. Density is proposed to be limited by the FAR applicable to the property and by bulk controls, including height limits.

## Proposed FAR Limits

Height Limit (feet)	30	40	65	85	125	160
FAR for structures with both residential and nonresidential uses	2.5	3.25	4.75	6*	6*	7*
FAR for any single use	2.25	3	4.25	4.5*	5*	5*

\*Existing limits

## Height, Bulk and Density Recommendations

- Replace current 64 percent upper-level lot coverage limitation for residential with floor area ratio (FAR) limits for all uses.
- Continue to allow additional floor area to meet City and neighborhood objectives such as focusing development around station areas and in revitalization areas, or as an incentive for mixed-use development.
- Eliminate current residential density limits for residential buildings.
- Allow a small height increase to accommodate well-designed residential streetfronts and privacy.

# Residential Amenities



Decks like these provide access to light and air for residents while meeting current residential amenity (open space) requirements.



New FAR standards will help encourage new ground-level and semi-public open spaces, which today are rarely provided.

In commercial zones, “open space” is required as space for use by residents (not the general public). Open space requirements are primarily met in the form of decks or balconies. Current requirements for residential open space do not effectively correspond to the demand for residential amenities and increase development costs, raising the cost of housing. Residents prefer a broad variety of “residential amenities” such as community rooms, gyms, or roof decks. The residential amenity recommendations require an appropriate minimum amount of space for residents and will be more consistent with comparable zones with similar development such as Seattle Mixed (SM) and downtown mixed use zones.

## Residential Amenities Recommendations

- Require residential amenity areas in an amount equal to at least 10 percent of the gross floor area of residential use, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the lot area
  - ♦ A maximum of 50 percent of on-site amenity area may be enclosed.
  - ♦ A maximum of 50 percent of the amenity area may be met off-site, by either constructing the amenity or by making a payment in lieu to the City for park improvements near the project.



Parking recommendations will allow businesses to move into existing buildings without having to provide new parking.



In Neighborhood Commercial zones the presence of off-street parking along streetfronts will be minimized.

Seattle's Land Use Code identifies the minimum number of parking spaces required based on the type and size of a use. These requirements, unchanged since the mid-1980s, are based on a national model that emphasizes single-occupant vehicle commuting and suburban standards, rather than promoting transit use and walkable communities, consistent with our Comprehensive Plan.

Changes are proposed to parking requirements based upon the City's 2000 Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study, in order to:

- **Build the urban neighborhoods that we want, not surface parking that we don't need:** advance the City's Urban Village strategy and encourage more pedestrian and transit-oriented development.
- **Reduce the cost of housing and commercial space:** developers and banks will still build what buyers or tenants demand, but requiring more increases their costs.
- **Support transit and other alternatives to the car in Seattle neighborhoods:** bus and rail transit, walking, and biking are healthy and viable alternatives to driving cars to work.
- **Improve the environment:** in the long run, reducing parking improves air and water quality, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, and creates more walkable communities.

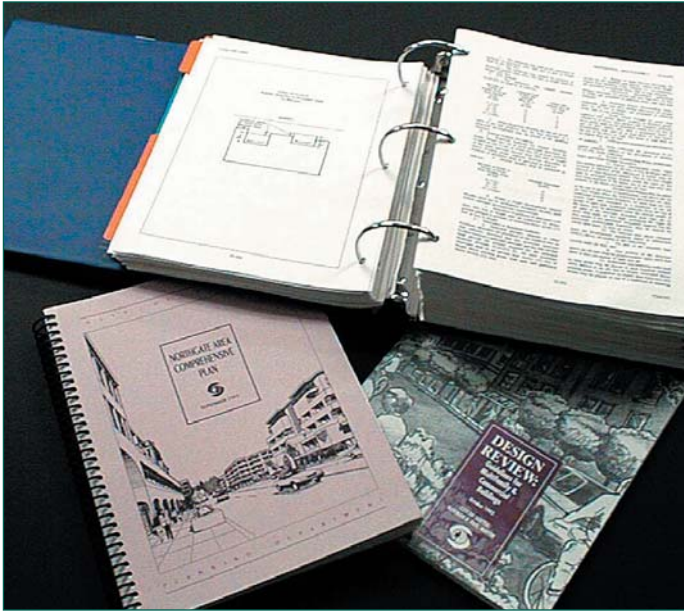
- **Be responsive to local conditions:** better reflect higher transit use and parking demand data.
- **Support development of smaller lots and re-use of existing buildings:** parking requirements are especially burdensome for smaller development. The effective re-use of existing buildings will help reduce tenant vacancies.

## Parking Recommendations

- Eliminate minimum parking requirements in Urban Centers and monorail and light rail station areas to reflect transit accessibility, and to encourage new development in Urban Centers.
- Allow on-site parking to be shared with other uses as long as it is signed short-term (4 hours or less).
- Establish a one-acre surface parking maximum to reduce new impervious surfaces.
- Lower parking requirements throughout commercial areas based on new demand data, transit accessibility, and City transit and walking goals.
- Waive parking for the first 1,500 ft<sup>2</sup> of businesses, instead of 2,500 ft<sup>2</sup> per use.
- Waive parking requirements up to 20 spaces for businesses that are locating in an existing building.
- Revise requirements for bicycle parking so that the number of parking spaces doesn't decrease when the number of required car spaces is reduced or eliminated.



# Simplifying the Land Use Code



*Code simplification will ease review of projects, while improving community understanding of the regulations and maintaining a high quality commercial environment.*

One of the primary objectives of the Neighborhood Business District Strategy is to simplify the Commercial chapter of the land use code, so that it is easier to understand and to use. The proposed amendments will simplify the code in a number of different ways:

- Reduce the length of the code. The Commercial chapter will go from 51 pages to approximately 27 pages.
- Reduce the number of uses that are regulated. The proposed code reduces the number of separate uses that are regulated in the code from 140 to 90.
- Improve the graphics. Revised graphics are proposed which more clearly illustrate code provisions; new graphics sometimes take the place of confusing text.
- Use more tables and charts. Tables can sometimes present requirements more clearly than text can.
- Use simpler language. Care has been taken to write the new Commercial Land Use Code in simple, easy to understand language, whenever legally possible.

- Remove circular references. The current Land Use Code sometimes forces the reader to look at a number of different sections of the code to find answers to simple questions. These circular references are being removed from the Commercial land use code.
- Remove unused code provisions. Some requirements were put in place in anticipation of development types or circumstances that have never or rarely been pursued. These sections of the code are being removed.
- Remove redundant sections. A number of code sections are repetitive, with the same regulations appearing a number of times throughout the Land Use Code. Where appropriate, these sections are consolidated in one location.

These changes should result in a Commercial Land Use Code that is simpler and easier to understand.

## Background: Why Amend the Land Use Code?

Seattle's Commercial Land Use Code (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.47) was adopted in 1986 after a six year planning process. The code has generally been successful in achieving many of the City's goals; for example Seattle has become a leader in encouraging mixed-use buildings. However, since the Code was first adopted, the City has revised the goals that guide the future growth of the City. Seattle's business districts play a key role in the City's strategy for managing growth as defined in the City's Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans. While the code isn't inconsistent with those plans, some changes to the code will help to better implement the City's growth management strategy.

A number of issues have raised particular concern:

- ♦ The code has incrementally become more complex and therefore, difficult to understand and navigate.
- ♦ The code is not flexible enough to respond to new circumstances or new ideas, requiring frequent amendments that result in an ever more complicated code.
- ♦ The code is overly focused on prohibiting negative things from happening, as opposed to encouraging new development that advances Seattle's Comprehensive Plan.
- ♦ Current rules require that buildings built under previous codes be brought up to current zoning standards; this discourages the use of some existing spaces and can significantly increase costs for new businesses.
- ♦ Parking requirements are out of date and do not reflect actual demand for parking in Seattle or the City's Comprehensive Plan goals to encourage walking and transit and bicycle use. Excessive parking requirements make small sites difficult to develop and increases the costs of

development which in turn increases the costs of commercial spaces and housing.

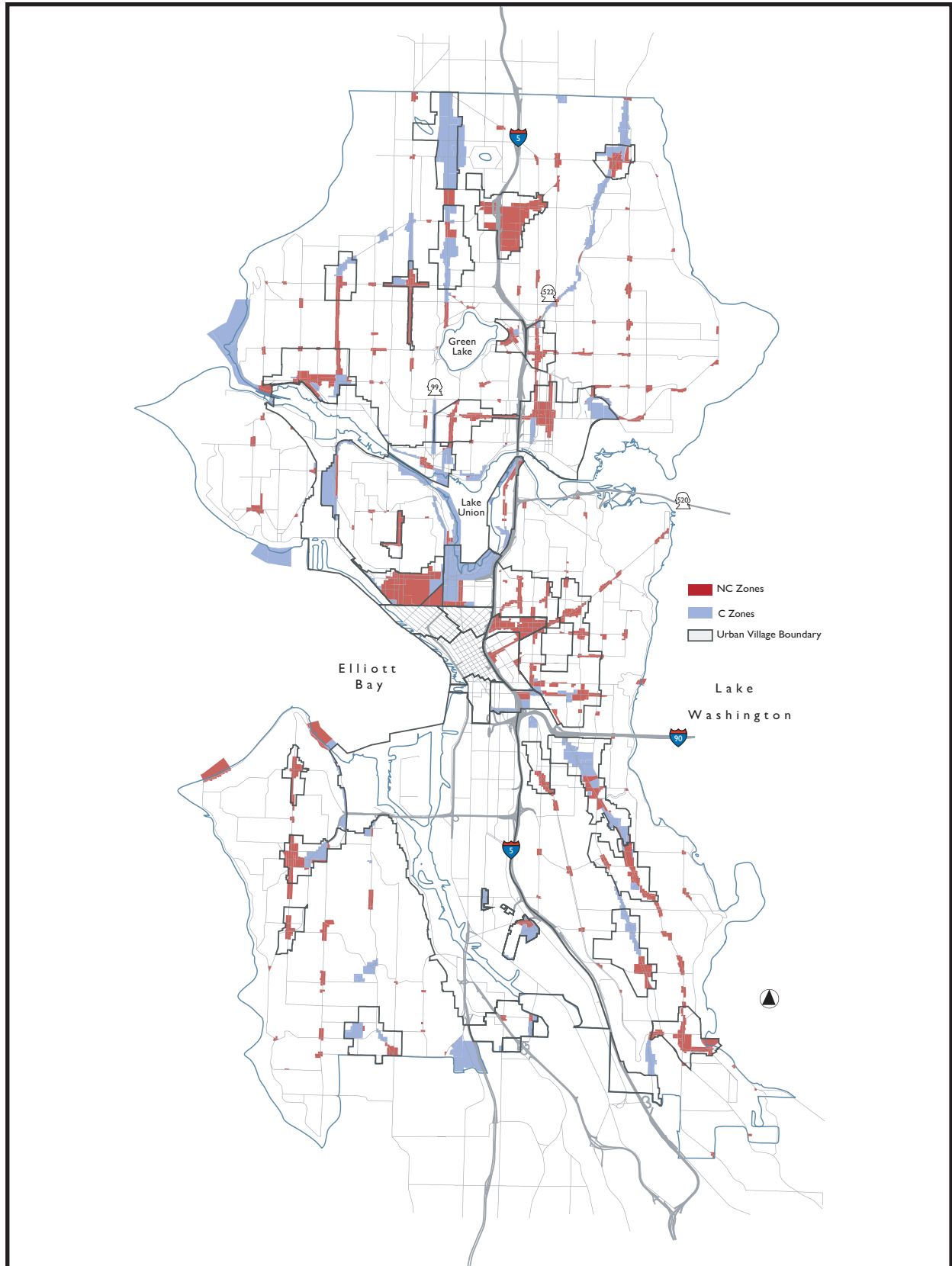
- ♦ Limits on coverage for the upper stories of mixed-use buildings create cookie-cutter buildings.
- ♦ Rules for decks and balconies require more space than residents are likely to use, and more space than is required for other similar development in non-commercial zones.
- ♦ Rules that create good neighborhoods for pedestrians are limited.
- ♦ Current rezone criteria, which encourage the mapping of an area with zones that reflect its existing character, make it difficult to use zoning to implement goals to transform a business district's character.

## Seattle's Business Districts

Seattle's neighborhood business districts encompass over 4,400 acres of commercially zoned land, approximately 8% of the city's total land area. They include all commercial land outside of Downtown Seattle or the city's industrial districts. These commercial areas are at the heart of the city's urban villages, the thirty-eight neighborhoods where the majority of the city's growth is planned to occur. They are also scattered outside of urban villages, providing services to surrounding neighborhoods. They currently contain over 135,000 jobs, and 20,000 housing units. There is enough capacity within these zones to triple the housing and to double the employment.

Seattle's neighborhood business districts take many forms, from large auto-oriented communities such as along Lake City Way NE and Aurora Avenue N, to small pedestrian-oriented business districts occupying the four corners of an intersection in an otherwise residential neighborhood. Neighborhood business districts are important to Seattle's economy, provide a valuable housing resource, provide jobs,

## Seattle's Commercial Zones





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services and goods for Seattle's residents, and are often the meeting places of Seattle's neighborhoods.

Over the past twenty years, a new vision for the City's commercial areas has emerged, one that seeks to enhance the pedestrian orientation of commercial districts, even in areas that may not currently be as friendly to pedestrians as we would like. This strategy has become key to the success of the City's growth management strategy and a prerequisite for a sustainable future. Seattle's goals for these areas recognize their importance and embrace the diversity of the different roles that they provide. The City seeks to foster mixed-use neighborhoods that are flexible enough to meet the future job, service, retail and housing needs of Seattle's existing and future residents. The City's goals also favor business districts that are both pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented, and are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

## Seattle's Land Use Code

The Commercial Land Use Code organizes commercial areas outside of Downtown into five different zones based on their historical and intended character. These zones can be classified into two general types: pedestrian-oriented Neighborhood Commercial (NC) areas and more automobile-oriented Commercial (C) areas.

- ♦ Seattle currently has three Neighborhood Commercial zones: Neighborhood Commercial 1, 2 and 3 (NC1, NC2, and NC3). These three zones differ primarily in the intensity and size of uses allowed and their preferred location. All three zones provide locations for multi-story commercial structures, multi-story mixed-use development, with commercial uses along the street front, and multi-story residential structures.
- ♦ There are two Commercial zones (C1 and C2). These zones differ in the intensity of commercial use they accommodate and their auto-orientation.

In addition to these zones, there are a number of overlays that can tailor a zone to local conditions. The two most prevalent overlays are a Pedestrian designation and the Residential designation. These overlays encourage a strong pedestrian-oriented commercial street front or encourage residential uses in commercial areas, respectively.

The Land Use Code addresses the following issues for each of the commercial zones:

- ♦ Appropriate location
- ♦ Permitted and prohibited uses
- ♦ Maximum sizes of use
- ♦ Changes of use
- ♦ Building height, bulk and density
- ♦ Street level design standards
- ♦ Residential amenity space
- ♦ Required parking quantity

The neighborhood business district strategy proposes changes to all of these features of commercial zones. In addition, because there are relationships between the commercial chapter of the Land Use Code and chapters addressing other types of areas and zones, minor amendments are proposed to ensure continued consistency among the zones. Changes to other sections of the code are not intended to be substantive. For more information about how the current Commercial Land Use Code regulates development, please review the Neighborhood Business District Strategy Background Report, September 2004.

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## Process and Objectives

The Neighborhood Business District Strategy (NBDS) is Seattle's first comprehensive review of the Commercial Land Use Code in twenty years. It responds to concerns raised about the current Land Use Code that the City's regulations may be discouraging rather than encouraging economic development. The proposals for the NBDS have emerged from an extensive public process and respond to concerns voiced by many different segments of the community.

In order to assist the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) in identifying a strategy for revising the code, and to help the department understand key concerns regarding the code, Mayor Greg Nickels and DPD convened an advisory committee. The committee consisted of representatives of neighborhoods and businesses, and members of the design and development communities. The advisory committee met throughout 2003 and 2004 and guided the development of a concept for revising the Commercial Land Use Code.

The concept developed with the advisory committee was presented in a series of public meetings held in the spring of 2004. Out of this public process, nine objectives to guide the update of the code were affirmed:

1. Strengthen Seattle's Comprehensive Plan urban village strategy
2. Support job creation and business vitality
3. Protect and enhance neighborhood character
4. Improve the pedestrian environment
5. Provide housing growth in neighborhood business districts
6. Achieve quality design through development flexibility
7. Support transit connections
8. Balance parking needs
9. Make the Land Use Code easier to use

After establishing objectives, strategies for amending the Land Use Code were developed. These strategies were presented at public meetings in the fall of 2004 and are the subject of this document. The final outcome of this process will be a substantially revised Commercial Land Use Code, Chapter 23.47A of the Seattle Municipal Code, amendments to the City's design guidelines, and general updates to the Land Use Code to maintain consistency across zones. For example, updating the names and categories of uses, without changing how a use is regulated in other zones, is proposed.

For more detailed information regarding the development of the NBDS and the public outreach process please visit the NBDS website at:  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/nbds>.

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## **NBDS Public Meetings**

The following events were hosted by the Department of Planning and Development:

*Commercial Areas Advisory Committee – met Summer 2003 to Summer 2004*

*Neighborhood Business District Strategy Citywide Open House and Forum – April 13, 2004*

*Neighborhood Business District Strategy Neighborhood Workshops:*

- South Seattle Community College – June 8, 2004
- Rainier Community Center – June 9, 2004
- John Stanford International School – June 14, 2004
- Seattle Central Community College – June 15, 2004
- Bitter Lake Community Center – June 21, 2004
- Loyal Heights Community Center – June 22, 2004

*Neighborhood Business District Strategy Fall Citywide Forums:*

- Evening – September 29, 2004
- Morning – September 30, 2004

*Neighborhood Pedestrian Designation Forums:*

- East Madison – October 12, 2004
- Columbia City – October 14, 2004
- Admiral – October 19, 2004
- Lake City – October 20, 2004
- Eastlake – October 25, 2004
- Greenwood/Phinney Ridge – October 28, 2004

In addition, DPD staff attended meetings of the following organizations to discuss the NBDS:

- Admiral Planning Coalition
- City Neighborhood Council
- Columbia City Chamber of Commerce
- Delridge Neighborhoods District Council
- Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Greenwood/Phinney Ridge Chamber of Commerce
- International Special Review District Board
- Lake City Chamber of Commerce
- Neighborhood District Council
- North Districts Stewardship Committee
- Northgate Stakeholders Group
- Pioneer Square Preservation Board
- Seattle Planning Commission

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## Relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan

The goals and strategies laid out in the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Village, Land Use and Neighborhood Planning Elements were the basis for proposed changes to the Commercial Chapter of the Land Use Code. The proposed changes will help to implement 89 specific Land Use Element Goals and Policies and 212 Goals and Policies from 30 Neighborhood Plans.

Out of all of the goals and policies that guide the City's activities in Commercial areas, only one potential inconsistency was identified. Policy LU109, related to maximum size of use limits, states: "Allow the limited expansion of existing businesses beyond established size limits in order to support the existing character and functions of the city's businesses and business districts."

The proposed amendments would implement this policy, allowing limited expansion of existing businesses beyond current size limits, by removing the maximum size limits that apply to new businesses and using one maximum size limit for all types of businesses. However in the future, expansions above the new higher maximum size limits would not be permitted. A Comprehensive Plan amendment would be required to ensure continuing consistency. For more information about the proposed changes to maximum size of use limits, see Chapter 3: Uses.

### Summary of Recommendations related to Commercial Zones

1. Retain current commercial zone categories but revise criteria for establishing NC zones and pedestrian-designated areas to better guide rezones of areas that may assist in making auto-oriented areas friendlier to pedestrians.
2. Map pedestrian-oriented commercial cores in business districts.
  - ♦ Adopt one Pedestrian designation (current pedestrian 1 and pedestrian 2 designations will be re-designated “pedestrian”).
  - ♦ Introduce pedestrian-designations to three neighborhoods: Admiral, Eastlake and Madison-Miller.
  - ♦ Expand Pedestrian designations in three neighborhoods: Columbia City, Greenwood-Phinney Ridge, and Lake City).
  - ♦ Evaluate other neighborhood business districts for Pedestrian designations in 2005.
3. Repeal the Neighborhood Commercial/Residential designation (current NC/R zones will be re-designated NC).
4. Make other amendments to the rezone evaluation criteria to permit these changes.

### Seattle’s Five Commercial Zones

#### Background

When the current Commercial Land Use Code was adopted in 1986, new Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Commercial (C) zones replaced zones first adopted in 1958. Criteria were developed to identify when a new zone was appropriate for a particular parcel of land. Generally, these criteria (SMC 23.47.072 to 23.47.088) were written to reinforce the existing character of an area. For example, the criteria would lead an auto-oriented retail area to be mapped with the Commercial 1 zone.

Many areas of the city have been rezoned from auto-oriented zones to pedestrian-oriented zones as a result of neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plans recommend that similar rezones in other areas might further community goals. However, the emphasis on maintaining the status quo in the current zoning criteria diminishes the value of planning and locational criteria as tools for shaping the future development of an area.

#### Recommendations

In order to support City policy objectives and neighborhood plan goals that favor pedestrian-oriented commercial districts, zone locational criteria are proposed to be amended. Appendix I presents the current and proposed language. Generally, the revised, simplified criteria will:

- ♦ Allow flexibility to rezone property to better achieve the City's goals, and
- ♦ Strengthen the relationship between the commercial zones and the City's Urban Village Strategy.

Changes to all commercial zone locational criteria would:

- ♦ Reference the urban village strategy and link the intensity of the commercial zone to the intended development in different levels of urban villages.

- ◆ Remove descriptions of the types of uses that can locate in the zones, which are more appropriate in the regulations themselves.
- ◆ Clarify confusing terms.
- ◆ Focus on using commercial zones to meet stated goals as opposed to maintaining existing character.

Specific changes to the Neighborhood Commercial 1, 2 and 3 zone locational criteria will:

- ◆ Allow these zones to be used to transform the character of an existing commercial area.
- ◆ Remove the presence or absence of vacant land from the criteria.
- ◆ Remove parking from the criteria, as parking is generally treated the same in all three zones.

Specific changes to the Commercial 1 and 2 zone locational criteria will:

- ◆ Generally encourage the use of these zones in areas that already have an auto-oriented character.
- ◆ Discourage these zones in areas with good transit access.

## Pedestrian Designations

### Background

Pedestrian designations are intended to “preserve or encourage intensely retail and pedestrian-oriented shopping districts where non-auto modes of transportation to and within the district are strongly favored.” Seattle’s two commercial area pedestrian districts (Pedestrian 1 [P1] and Pedestrian 2 [P2]) affect four different aspects of a development project:

#### 1. The types of uses that are allowed to occupy street level spaces along a pedestrian street

The Pedestrian designation requires that certain types of uses occupy the street level of a structure adjacent to designated “principal pedestrian streets.” These uses generally have high numbers of customers and are thus likely to support a business environment where customers will walk among a number of businesses on a single trip. For more information about these uses, see Chapter 3, Uses.

#### 2. The amount of parking required to be provided for those street level uses

Both Pedestrian designations allow for a waiver of parking required to be provided by street level businesses. These waivers vary by zone and by use, with the Pedestrian 1 designation granting larger parking waivers than the Pedestrian 2 designation. For more information about these waivers, see Chapter 5, Parking.

#### 3. The location of parking on a lot in relation to the building and the street

Both Pedestrian designations prohibit parking between a building and the street. Instead, parking is required to be located behind or beneath a building. In addition, the P2 designation (but not the P1 designation) allows parking next to a building. Consequently, the P2 designation has been more appropriate for areas that do not have alleys where parking behind and within buildings is more difficult. For more informa-



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tion about the parking location requirements see Chapter 4, Development Standards.

#### **4. How much of the street level of a building can have blank walls.**

Both Pedestrian designations require windows at the street level and limit the amount of street level space that can have blank walls. This creates visual interest for pedestrians, more compelling commercial spaces to encourage business and safety as businesses are able to see what is happening along the street. For more information see Chapter 4, Development Standards.

### **Recommendations**

A Pedestrian designation will encourage ground floor uses that contribute to pedestrian activity and reduce the amount of parking required for some uses. The new Pedestrian designation allows the market to play a stronger role in determining what uses occupy ground floor spaces. Pedestrian-designated areas will serve as the core of Seattle's neighborhood business districts, with street level uses that can attract pedestrians, and parking waivers that encourage commercial activity. A broader range of street-level uses will be permitted outside of the Pedestrian designation. In order to make this broad change, a number of specific changes are proposed.

#### **1. Combine P1 and P2 Designations into One P Designation**

Recommendations for amendments to development standards would make the parking location and blank wall provisions standard requirements for all Neighborhood Commercial zones (see Chapter 4: Development Standards). Consequently, the Pedestrian designations will only be used to regulate uses that are permitted at street level along a principal pedestrian street, and reduce the amount of parking that those uses are required to provide.

In order to support and generally strengthen pedestrian-friendly development in all Neighborhood

Commercial zones, parking location standards in P2-designated zones are proposed to apply to all NC zones and parking location standards in P1 designated zones is proposed to apply to all P designated areas (see Chapter 4: Development Standards.) The Pedestrian 2 waiver (generally the first 5,000 square feet of a business establishment is exempt from the parking requirement) provides a strong incentive to create space for businesses at street level within the pedestrian district. It also acknowledges that many customers of businesses within the pedestrian district will be using means other than driving to access the business, and encourages small to medium sized businesses. The Pedestrian 1 designation which allows parking waivers for spaces up to 25,000 square feet is larger than appropriate for many areas, and in fact has never been used. Consequently, combining the two designations into one and applying the existing P2 parking waiver to all Pedestrian designations is recommended.

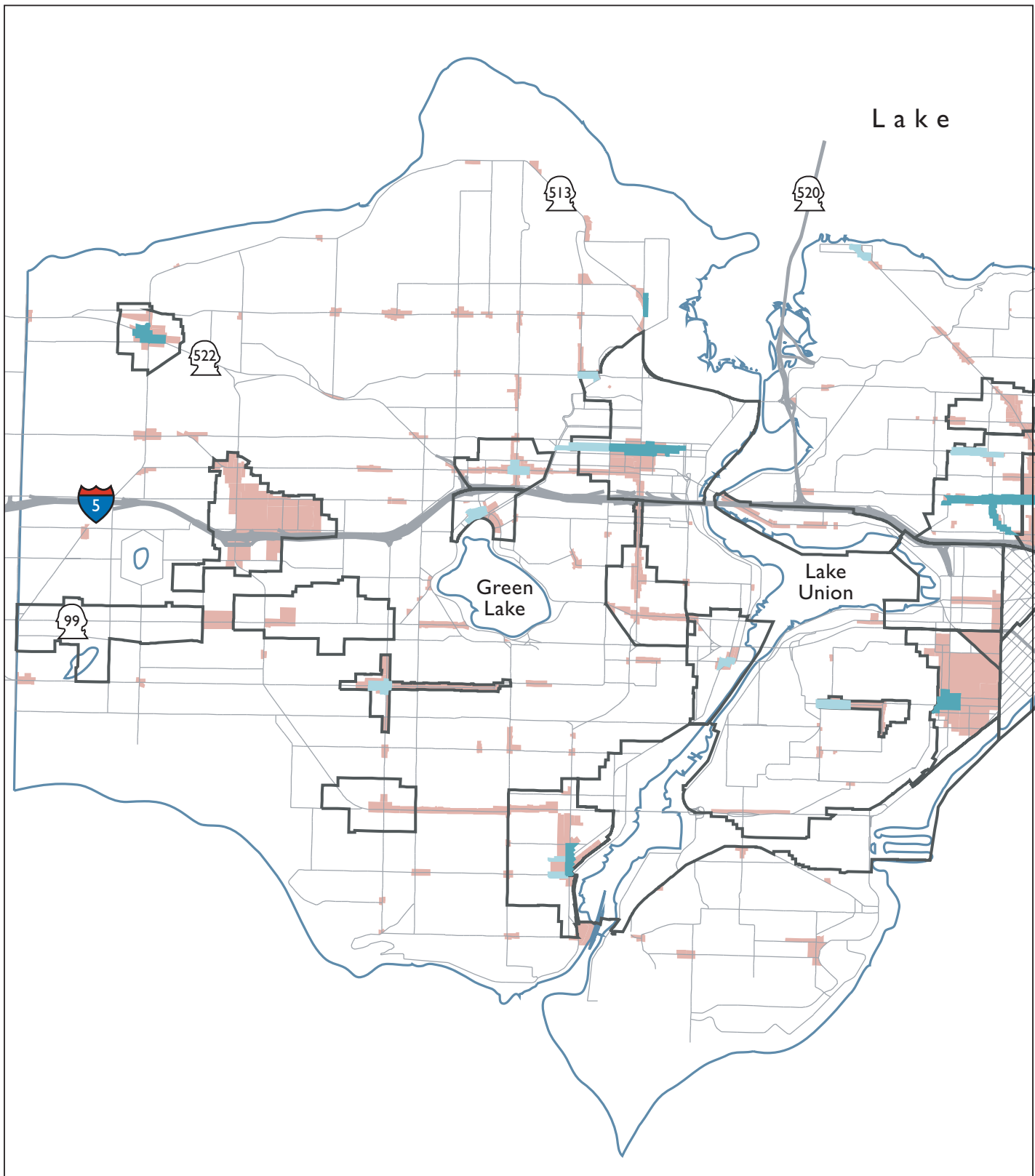
In order to implement this proposal, current sections 23.47.040 through 23.47.050 which contain the current Pedestrian designation requirements, will be replaced with and incorporated into sections regulating street level uses (23.47A.005), street level development standards (23.47A.008) and parking (23.47A.032 and 23.54.015). All areas with "P1" and "P2" designations will be rezoned to "P."

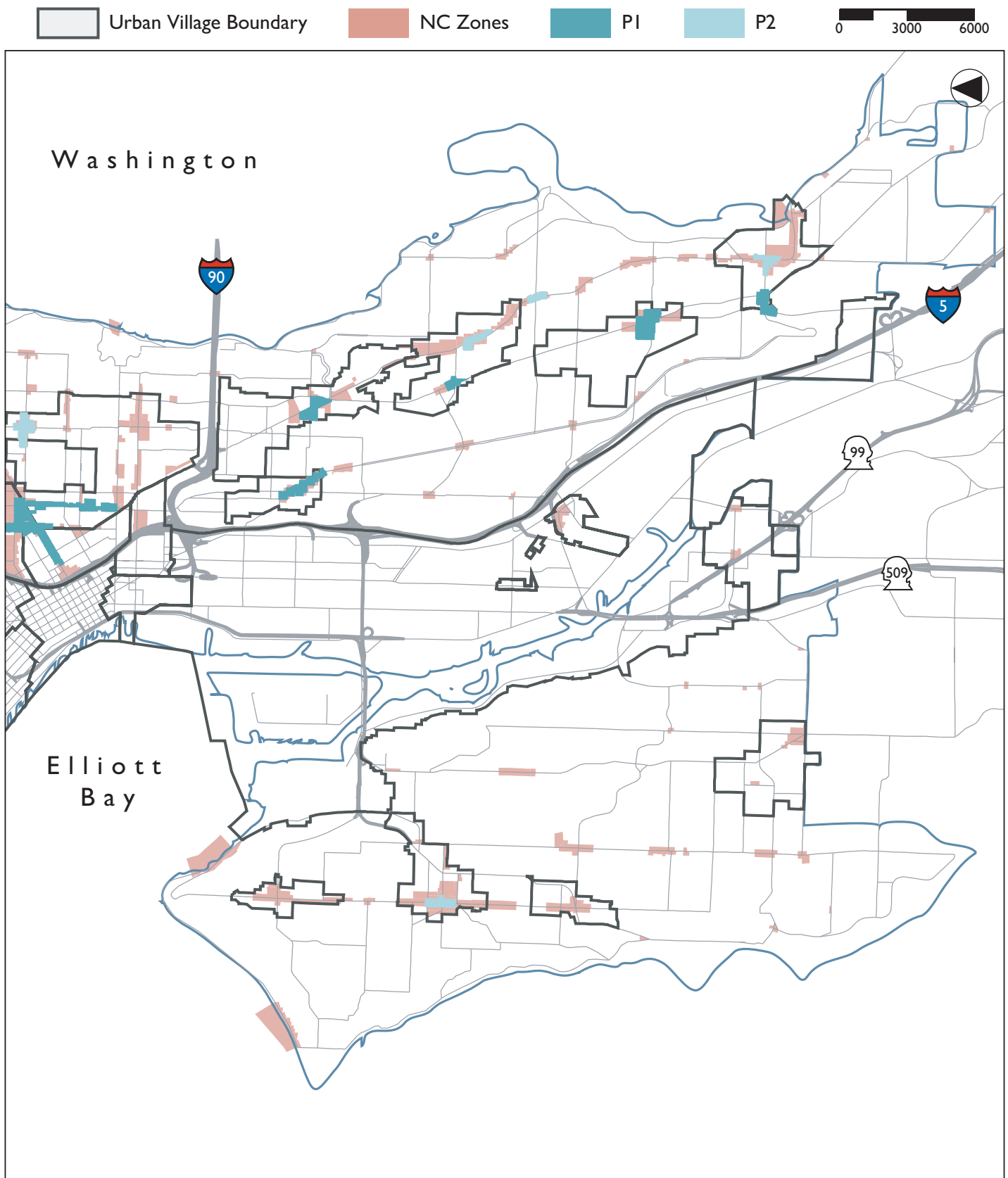
#### **2. Amend the Pedestrian Designation Locational Criteria**

There are a number of reasons why the locational criteria (SMC 23.47.086 and 23.47.088) for the Pedestrian designations should be amended:

- ♦ The two existing Pedestrian designations are proposed to be combined into one designation. This means that the two sets of locational criteria need to be merged.
- ♦ Many neighborhood plans indicated a desire to create a new pedestrian-oriented commercial area in areas that may not meet current locational criteria, since these are based solely upon

Neighborhood Commercial Areas with Pedestrian Designations





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existing conditions as opposed to desired conditions. The existing locational criteria support designating areas that already have a strong pedestrian character, but do not effectively support the creation of a new Pedestrian designation in areas where a pedestrian-friendly character does not exist, but is desirable. Making existing business districts more pedestrian-oriented helps to further citywide and neighborhood goals.

- ♦ Pedestrian designations will take on more importance. Within these designated areas, retail and service uses would be required at street level. In all other areas, residential uses will be allowed outright at street level.
- ♦ Carefully mapping Pedestrian designations affords the opportunity to identify a commercial center or node within neighborhoods, further defining the pedestrian oriented area where local residents may find the goods and services that they need and eliminate unnecessary automobile trips.

The current criteria and proposed changes to those current requirements can be found in Table 1.

### **3. Map New Pedestrian Designations in 6 Neighborhoods**

As part of implementing this proposal, Neighborhood Commercial 2 and 3 (NC2, or NC3) districts are being reviewed and inventoried to determine whether Pedestrian designations should be introduced or expanded. Six initial areas have been identified and inventoried: Admiral, Columbia City, Eastlake, Greenwood-Phinney Ridge, Lake City and Madison-Miller. Neighborhood plans and meetings with residents, property owners and businesses in these areas have informed recommendations to map pedestrian districts in these areas. Additional areas will be reviewed in 2005.

For more information about each of these areas, please see the *Neighborhood Business District Strategy Rezone Analyses for Pedestrian and Residential Designations*.

**Table 1:**  
**Locational Criteria: Existing compared with Proposed Criteria for Pedestrian Designations**

Existing Pedestrian 1	Existing Pedestrian 2	Proposed Pedestrian	Notes
A. Function. To preserve and encourage an intensely retail and pedestrian-oriented shopping district where non-auto modes of transportation to and within the district are strongly favored.	A. Function. To preserve and encourage a pedestrian-oriented retail shopping area where non-auto modes of transportation within the district are strongly favored but where many of the conditions favoring designation as PI are not present.	A. Function. To preserve or encourage an intensely retail and pedestrian-oriented shopping district where non-auto modes of transportation to and within the district are strongly favored, and the following characteristics can be achieved:	Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, uses “preserve or encourage.”  “...and the following characteristics can be achieved” provides more flexibility and is easier to evaluate than “Desired characteristics”
B. Desired Characteristics.	B. Desired Characteristics.	1. Pedestrian interest and activity at street level;	Allows the designation to be applied in a wider variety of neighborhoods. Access to parking will be addressed through the NC zones, rather than the P overlay.
1. Intense pedestrian interest and activity at street level;	1. A variety of retail/ service activities and interest along the street front, with limited breaks for parking;		
2. Wide variety of retail/ service activities;		2. A variety of retail/ service activities along the street front;	Consolidates PI and P2.
3. Large number of shops and services per block;		3. Large number of shops and services per block;	No change from PI.
4. Buildings built to the front property line with a minimum of auto-oriented uses;	2. Primarily built to the front property line;	4. Buildings primarily built to the front property line;	Consolidates PI and P2.
	4. Commercial frontage uninterrupted by housing, drive-in facilities or large parking areas along the principal pedestrian street front.	5. Commercial frontage uninterrupted by housing or auto-oriented uses;	A key difference between the P designation and other areas is that housing and auto-oriented uses are not permitted at the street front.
5. Minimal pedestrian-auto conflicts.	3. Minimal pedestrian-auto conflicts;	6. Minimal pedestrian-auto conflicts	No change.

Existing Pedestrian 1	Existing Pedestrian 2	Proposed Pedestrian	Notes
C. Physical Conditions Favoring Designation as P1.	C. Physical Conditions Favoring Designation as P2.	B. Physical Conditions Favoring Designation as P.	
1. Pedestrian district generally surrounded by medium- to high-density residential areas and/or major activity centers;	1. Pedestrian district generally surrounded by medium- to high-density residential areas and/or major activity centers;	1. Pedestrian district generally surrounded by residential areas and/or major activity centers; or a commercial node in an urban center or urban village;	Combines P1 and P2, allows for the designation of areas that are not currently “pedestrian districts” in urban centers and villages.
2. Excellent access for transit, bicycle and pedestrian;		2. Excellent access for transit, bicyclists and pedestrians;	No change from P1.
	1. The area is surrounded by low- to medium-density residential areas;		
	2. Pedestrian access from residential areas is good, and/or excellent transit service exists;		
3. Availability of on- and off-street parking which can accommodate those who drive to the area; 4. Commercial areas with sufficient depth to accommodate off-street parking away from the principal pedestrian street; 5. Alleys or side streets allow access to parking areas by means other than curb cuts on principal pedestrian street;	3. On- and off-street parking capacity is limited, and full parking waiver (as in Pedestrian 1) could create unacceptable spillover parking in surrounding residential areas; 4. The commercial area is shallow, so that there is limited opportunity to provide accessory parking away from the principal pedestrian street front.		These criteria were used to differentiate between P1 and P2 and are no longer needed.
6. Strong existing pedestrian character substantially reduces impact of parking waiver on surrounding areas.			The designation can help to create this character where it doesn’t currently exist.
		3. Commercially zoned areas on both sides of an arterial, or a commercially zoned block faces across an arterial from a park, major institution, or other activity center.	Visibility is important to create a thriving retail and shopping district. Activity on both sides of the street increases pedestrian interest.



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## Residential Designation (NC/R)

### Background

The Neighborhood Commercial/Residential (NC/R) designation was created with the adoption of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. It was first intended to allow residential-only buildings in commercial areas without a conditional use process and without residential density limits that would otherwise apply. However, when adopted, the /R designation retained the conditional use requirements for residential-only buildings because of concerns that allowing street level residential uses broadly throughout a commercial area could negatively impact the business district. Neighborhoods were given the option of allowing residential-only buildings without a conditional use requirement as a separate action from mapping the /R designation. A number of neighborhoods chose to allow residential-only buildings without mapping the /R designation. Only two neighborhoods mapped an area with the /R designation and allowed residential-only structures without conditional use review.

According to the Land Use Code, the function of a residential or /R designated area is to maintain existing residential uses and/or promote increased residential development. NC/R designated areas "provide locations for moderate density residential development in single purpose and mixed use structures; limit single purpose commercial development; and encourage commercial streetfronts built to the street property line." The NC/R zone has been mapped in six out of the 37 urban centers and villages.

The Residential or /R designation does three things:

1. Removes residential density limits for residential-only projects.

Under the NC/R designation, any residential-only building is exempt from density limits that apply in other areas.

2. Restricts commercial space:  
Under the NC/R designation, the total commercial space in a commercial-only building is restricted to 1.0 FAR or to 20,000 square feet, whichever is greater. When a minimum of 35% of the gross floor area (GFA) of a building is in residential use, commercial space restrictions increase to 1.5 FAR for 30' and 40' height limits, and to 2.0 FAR for 65' and higher height limits. Other FAR limits still apply.
3. Provides flexibility for the design of ground level spaces.

In order to ensure that ground floor commercial space is flexible and can accommodate a range of commercial uses, the City has developed standards for the height and depth of ground floor spaces in mixed-use development. The NC/R designation exempts buildings from those standards.

### Recommendation

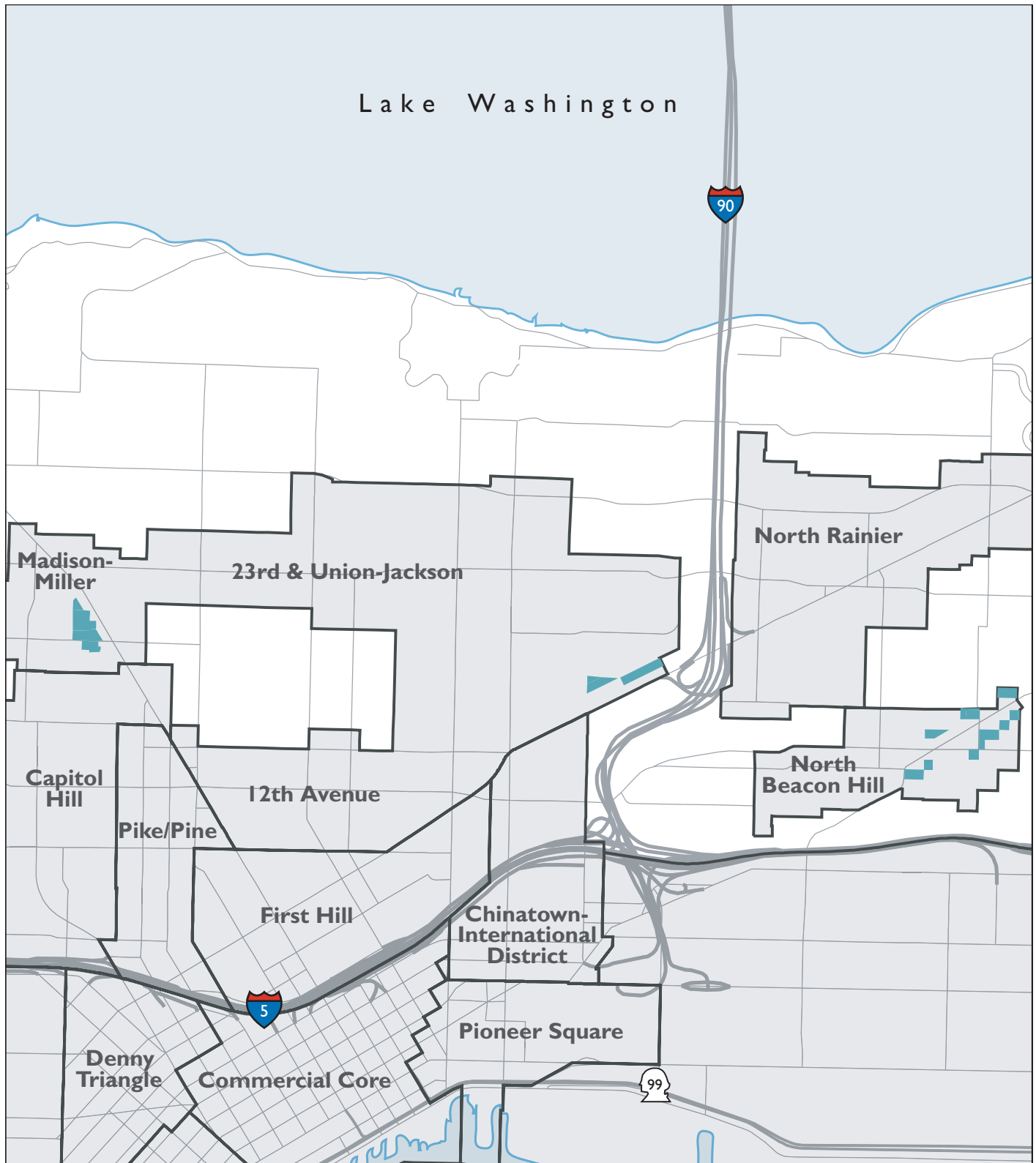
The /R designation, after other proposed changes to the Land Use Code, would have minimal impact on the areas where it is zoned. The intended function of the /R designation, which is to allow and encourage residential development within a mixed-use commercial area, can occur without the /R designation. Consequently, it is recommended that areas currently zoned with the /R designation be rezoned to eliminate the /R designation, and that provisions relating to the designation be repealed.

Proposed Code amendments to commercial zoning provisions will otherwise fulfill the primary objectives for the NC/R designation by allowing residential-only buildings more broadly through mapping, and by removing residential density limits.

In almost all commercial areas, residential-only buildings will generally be permitted without a conditional use approval. The few exceptions are:

- ◆ P-designated areas,
- ◆ areas with height limits over 65 feet,

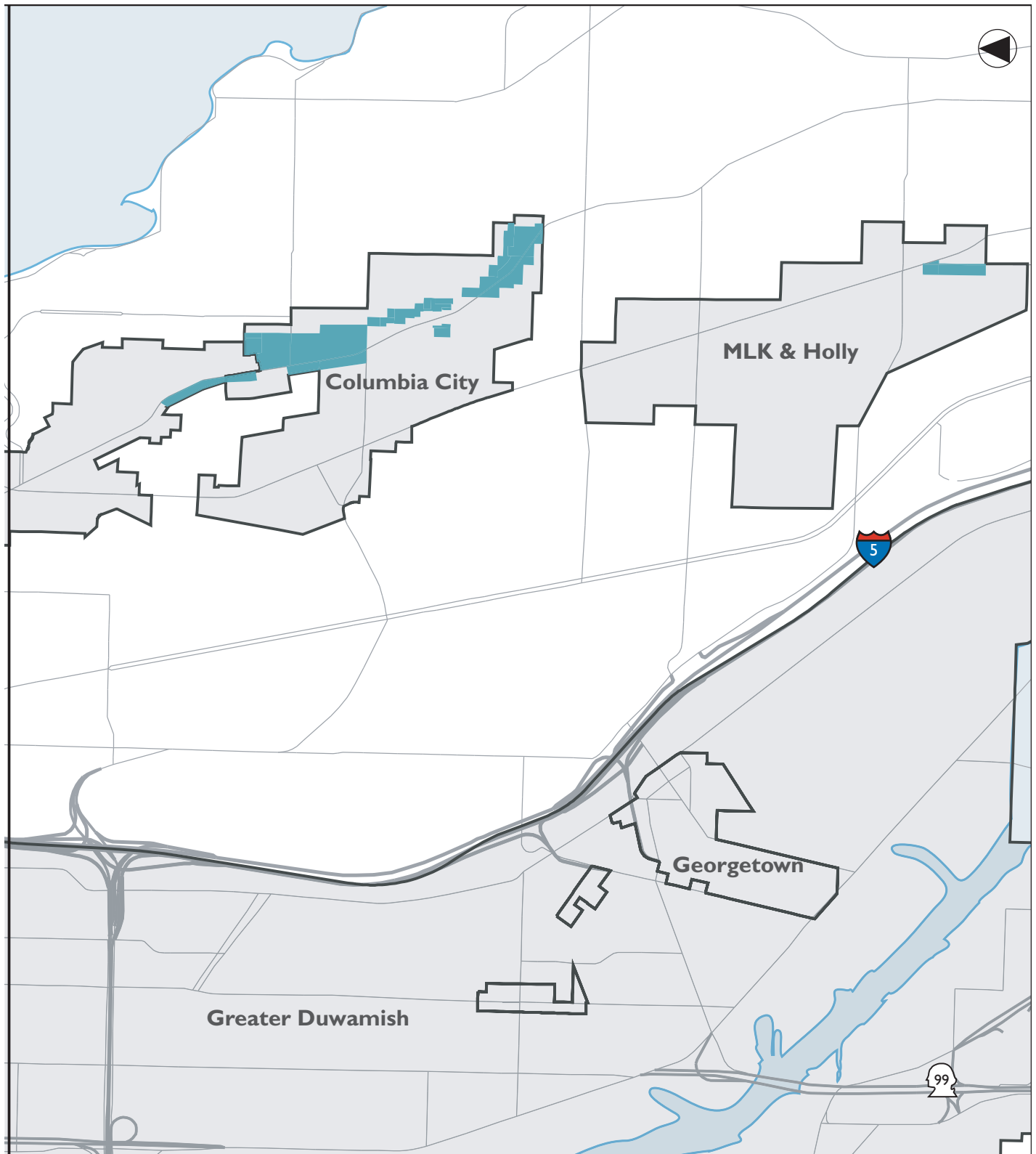
## Neighborhood Commercial/Residential Designated Areas



Urban Village Boundary

NC/R

0 1050 2100



- ♦ NC1-zoned areas along arterials,
- ♦ C2-zoned areas, and
- ♦ the Lake City and Bitter Lake Village hub urban villages where neighborhood plans indicated that such buildings are not appropriate.

NC/R zoned areas do not meet any of these criteria, and so residential uses would be permitted at street level in these areas with or without the /R designation. There would not be a density limit for residential-only buildings in any zone.

If retained, only two aspects of the NC/R designation would be unique to that zone:

1. more flexibility for the design of ground floor commercial spaces, and
2. slight restrictions on commercial development.

Neither of these aspects of the designation are compelling reasons to retain it. The City's basic standards for the design of ground floor commercial spaces are based on standard specifications for retail and restaurant uses. They encourage spaces that are flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of businesses over time. The Design Review process allows for flexibility to depart from those standards when design objectives are met.

The stricter limits on commercial FAR are intended to encourage residential development in the current NC/R zoned areas, even when a commercial building is proposed. Most of the areas zoned NC/R front on side streets and are not going to be attractive for sizeable commercial projects. These are parcels that are more likely to see development that incorporates residential uses. However, if all of the parcels zoned NC/R that could potentially develop were to develop to the maximum permitted amount of commercial space (an assumption that is probably not realistic) the impacts would be minimal.

A more reasonable analysis takes into account that some of these parcels will be developed with residential uses, some with commercial space, and some with a combination of the two. Table 3 shows

the difference that repeal of the /R designation could reasonably be expected to have on residential and employment capacity within the six urban villages where it has been mapped. Generally, the impact of removing the /R designation will be minimal across all zoned parcels.

For more information, please see the Neighborhood Business District Strategy Pedestrian and Residential Designations Director's Report and Analyses.

## Other Changes to Rezone Criteria

### Background

The Rezone evaluation criteria (23.34.007) currently require that "C. Overlay districts established pursuant to neighborhood plans adopted by the City Council may be modified only pursuant to amendments to neighborhood plans adopted or amended by the City Council after January 1, 1995." Many of the current P1 and P2 zones, and all of the /R designated areas were mapped pursuant to neighborhood plans, and thus would not be possible without a Comprehensive Plan amendment under this requirement.

### Recommendation

This section is proposed to be removed. The code already states that "Council adopted neighborhood plans that apply to the area proposed for rezone shall be taken into consideration (23.34.008 D2.) The language in 23.34.007B provides an unnecessary hurdle that can prevent common sense changes to overlay districts. The remaining rezone criteria provides ample safeguards from inappropriate rezones as well as criteria that considers adopted neighborhood plan goals and policies.

**Table 2:**  
**Impact on Urban Village Development Capacity of Removing /R Designation**

	Current Gross Capacity (existing + capacity for new)	Change in Capacity as a result of removal of /R Designation	New Gross Capacity with removal of /R Designation
Units			
23 <sup>rd</sup> & Jackson-Union	5,652	-23	5,629
Columbia City	2,941	-63	2,878
Madison-Miller	2,870	-34	2,836
MLK@Holly	5,497	0	5,497
N. Beacon Hill	1,731	-1	1,730
North Rainier	5,224	-5	5,219
Commercial Square Feet			
23 <sup>rd</sup> & Jackson-Union	1,919,717	+11,253	1,930,970
Columbia City	1,119,065	+28,345	1,147,410
Madison-Miller	703,366	+19,117	722,483
MLK@Holly	1,183,897	0	1,183,897
N. Beacon Hill	169,999	+900	170,899
North Rainier	5,413,297	+2,771	5,416,068
Jobs			
23 <sup>rd</sup> & Jackson-Union	6,399	+37	6,436
Columbia City	3,730	+94	3,824
Madison-Miller	2,344	+64	2,408
MLK@Holly	3,946	0	3,946
N. Beacon Hill	566	+3	569
North Rainier	18,044	+9	18,053

“Development capacity” is based on the Department of Planning and Development’s development capacity model. The model compared net additional housing units or jobs that could be built on vacant and redevelopable land based on current zoning and a rezone to an NC2 or NC3 zone without the /R designation. It does not identify housing units or jobs that could be added to the city under major institution master plans, on sites that typically are not redeveloped such as publicly-owned parcels, or in under-used historic landmarks.





### Summary of Use Recommendations

1. Remove unnecessary obstacles to residential development in commercial areas.
  - ♦ Allow housing at street level in most commercial zones outside of Pedestrian designated areas.
  - ♦ Maintain restrictions on residential use in the most intensive auto-oriented, densest and smallest commercial areas.
2. Refine and simplify use and maximum size of business standards.
  - ♦ Consolidate the list of uses. Distinguish uses only to the extent needed due to impacts or activities associated with the use.
  - ♦ Simplify size of use limitations in neighborhood commercial zones without allowing larger uses than allowed for existing businesses today.
3. Broaden the range of uses that qualify for street-level use in pedestrian-designated areas to include community centers, hotels, medical services and parks.
4. Allow more flexibility when a new use locates in an existing structure that doesn't meet current code requirements:
  - ♦ Waive parking up to 20 spaces.
  - ♦ No longer require structural changes to meet mixed-use standards when adding residential units to existing commercial buildings.

### Overview

Use regulations allow for adjacent developments to be better neighbors. Use requirements also reflect differences among the City's commercial zones.

The Land Use Code's commercial use standards (beginning with SMC 23.47.004 and .006) are intended to ensure compatibility among uses by limiting more intensive uses in more sensitive commercial zones and allowing the greatest variety and intensity of uses in less sensitive zones. This is a hierarchical system that establishes the greatest overall protection for the pedestrian-oriented NC1, NC2 and NC3 zones, and the least restrictive use standards for the automobile-oriented C1 and C2 zones.

Uses are regulated in a number of different ways in the existing Land Use Code:

1. A chart of uses depicts where uses are permitted and where they are prohibited.
2. Some uses are identified as "conditional uses." These are reviewed on a case-by-case basis according to defined criteria, and decisions about them are subject to appeal.
3. Maximum size limits apply to many uses.
4. Street-level uses, meeting specific criteria, are required in Pedestrian-designated areas. These requirements are intended to ensure a lively pedestrian streetscape. (See Chapter 2: Commercial Zones)
5. Permitted uses may be required to provide parking depending on the demand for parking they may generate. (See Chapter 5: Parking)

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## Use chart

### Background

In order to determine which uses are permitted in each zone, the Land Use Code contains a chart identifying over 140 categories and sub-categories of uses. The long list of uses is intended to identify uses that are regulated substantially differently. However, this is not the case. Frequently different uses are similarly regulated and distinctions between those uses have become less important over time (*pet grooming* becoming more like *barber shops*, for example.) Identifying them as distinct uses in this case results in unnecessary review.

When an owner wants to change the use of a space a “change of use” permit is generally required to establish the new use. The change of use process is intended to identify different requirements that may be applicable to the new use. Where there are substantially the same requirements for both uses, the change of use review only adds time and costs to the process.

### Recommendation

DPD’s experience and analysis of the current list of uses suggests that the use table should be simplified and consolidated. The result of these proposed amendments will be to reduce this list in commercial zones from 140 to 92 uses. Simplifying the use chart will allow for a more efficient and less costly change of use process making the reuse of existing commercial spaces easier, a benefit to small business owners and neighborhoods alike. The changes to the chart will require changes to the definitions of those uses, and a new “Chapter 23.84A Definitions” is proposed to replace the current definitions.

In simplifying the use chart, some uses seemed appropriate to permit or prohibit in different

areas, because of their similarity to other uses. For example, it is proposed that all *lodging* uses be regulated similarly and allowed in all commercial zones subject to maximum size of use limits, that *kennels* be treated the same as *animal shelters* given their similar impacts and that both be permitted in the C2 zone, and that *fuel sales* and *sales of commercial equipment and construction materials* be combined into one category (*heavy commercial sales*) with maximum size limits in the NC3 zone.

In addition, these changes provide an opportunity to better better define some existing uses.

- “Doggie day care” facilities that provide on-site outdoor play area for four or more dogs, are proposed to be classified as *animal shelters and kennels* because their impacts are most similar to the impacts of these facilities.
- *Rail transit facilities* are proposed to be added as a use. Light rail and monorail transit facilities are currently permitted under rules regarding essential public facilities, but they are not explicitly listed as uses. Identifying them as *rail transit facilities* clarifies that they are generally permitted everywhere.

Only three uses are proposed to be completely removed and not consolidated with other uses.

- ♦ *Recycling collection stations* were the collection facilities for recyclables that were prevalent in the City before Seattle started its recycling program. These facilities are no longer used, and the use category is no longer needed.
- ♦ *Business incubators* were defined as facilities that provided “space, logistical support and business planning and operational support to a number of start-up... businesses.” This category was developed after a proposal came in to create a business incubator. However, that project was never built, and the use category has never been used.

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## Proposed List of Uses Regulated in Commercial Zones

- I. Commercial
    - A. Sales and services, General
      - 1. Retail sales and services, General
      - 2. Retail sales, Multipurpose
    - B. Sales and services, Heavy
      - 1. Retail sales and services, Non-household
      - 2. Retail sales and services, Major durables
      - 3. Commercial sales, Heavy
      - 4. Commercial services, Heavy
      - 5. Wholesale showrooms
    - C. Eating and drinking establishments
      - 1. Restaurants
      - 2. Drinking establishments
    - D. Lodging
    - E. Entertainment
      - 1. Theaters and spectator sports facilities
      - 2. Sports and recreation, Indoor
      - 3. Sports and recreation, Outdoor
      - 4. Adult motion picture theaters
      - 5. Adult panorams
    - F. Sales and services, Automotive
      - 1. Retail sales and services, Automotive
      - 2. Sales and rental of motorized vehicles
      - 3. Vehicle repair, Major automotive
    - G. Sales and services, Marine
      - 1. Sales and rental of large boats
      - 2. Vessel repair, Minor
      - 3. Vessel repair, Major
      - 4. Marine service station
      - 5. Sale of boat parts or accessories
    - H. Animal Shelters and Kennels
    - I. Office
    - J. Medical services
    - K. Laboratories, Research and development
    - L. Food processing and craft work
  - II. Transportation facilities
    - A. Rail transit facilities
    - B. Passenger terminals
    - C. Vehicle storage and maintenance
      - 1. Transportation services, Personal
      - 2. Bus base
      - 3. Railroad switchyard
    - D. Transportation facilities, Air
      - 1. Helistops
      - 2. Heliports
      - 3. Airports (water-based)
      - 4. Airports (land-based)
  - E. Parking and moorage
    - 1. Parking, Principal use
      - a. Park and pool lots
      - b. Park and ride lots
    - 2. Towing services
    - 3. Boat moorage
    - 4. Dry boat storage
  - F. Cargo terminals
- III. Utilities
    - A. Utility Service Uses
    - B. Communication utility, Minor
    - C. Communication utility, Major
    - D. Recycling
    - E. Solid waste management
    - F. Sewage treatment plants
    - G. Power plants
  - IV. Manufacturing
    - A. Manufacturing, Light
    - B. Manufacturing, General
    - C. Manufacturing, Heavy
  - V. High impact uses
  - VI. Storage
    - A. Mini-warehouse
    - B. Warehouse
    - C. Storage, Outdoor
  - VII. Institutions
    - A. Institutions not listed below
    - B. Child care center
    - C. Museum
    - D. Community clubs and centers
    - E. Religious facilities
    - F. Public library
    - G. School, Elementary or secondary
  - VIII. Public facilities
    - A. Jails
    - B. Work-release centers
  - IX. Residential
    - A. Residential uses not listed below
    - B. Caretaker's quarters
  - X. Live/work units
  - XI. Parks and Open Space
  - XII. Agricultural uses
    - A. Animal husbandry
    - B. Horticulture
    - C. Aquaculture
  - XIII. Cemeteries

- ♦ *Restaurants with drive-in lanes* are currently identified as a use. Drive-in lanes are currently regulated as a feature of development, and the conditions for providing drive-in lanes are proposed to be moved to that section of the code.

For more detailed information regarding proposed edits to the uses, see Appendix II: Recommended changes to the use chart. These changes are reflected in extensive changes to Chapter 23.84 Definitions. Because of the numerous changes to the chapter, it will be replaced with a new chapter: 23.84A.

In order to ensure the consistent use of terms and definitions across all zone categories, simplification of the uses regulated in the Commercial Chapter of the Land Use Code require changes to the uses regulated in other sections of the code. Proposed changes to simplify the use chart in the Commercial zones were analyzed to ensure that they do not change how any use is regulated in a non-Commercial zone. A summary of the proposed changes to all other chapters of the code is in Appendix III: Edits to Other Parts of the Land Use Code.

Because the Shoreline Master Program refers to the current Chapter 23.84, and amendments to Shoreline provisions will not become effective until the State Department of Ecology approves them, the current definitions chapter (23.84) will not be repealed until the Shoreline code changes go into effect.

## Conditional uses

### Background

A conditional use is a use permitted only if it meets certain conditions. There are two types of conditional uses: administrative conditional uses that can be approved by the Director of DPD, subject to appeal to the Hearing Examiner; and council conditional uses that must be approved by the City Council. The criteria for approval are unique to each conditional use.

## Recommendations

Code provisions that guide the approval of a conditional use (SMC 23.47.006) are often complex and have been frequently amended. With other changes that are proposed to the Land Use Code, some conditional use criteria will become less relevant. Changes to the conditions are proposed:

### I. Administrative Conditional Uses

The following uses are permitted only as administrative conditional uses, and may be permitted only after a review based on the Land Use Code's criteria.

#### Restaurants with drive-in lanes (23.47.006 B1)

Restaurants with drive-in lanes are currently the only drive-in businesses that require a conditional uses. Drive-in lanes are treated as development standards for all other drive-in businesses. Review of drive-in lanes can be simplified by moving the criteria used to evaluate *restaurants with drive-in lanes* to the general discussion of drive-in lanes. *Restaurants with drive-in lanes* would no longer be a use distinct from a *restaurant*, but the current criteria would still be used to evaluate the appropriateness of drive-in lanes.

#### Park-and-Ride lots (23.47.006 B3)

One of the conditions that park-and-ride lots must meet is that they have "direct vehicular access" to an arterial. However, new development standards proposed for commercial areas discourage parking access from crossing sidewalks, preferring other access to parking, such as through an alley. Therefore this condition is proposed to be changed to state "be adjacent to" an arterial.



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## **Single-purpose residential structures and Residential uses in C2 zones (23.47.006 B4 and B5)**

See residential uses, below

### **Principal use parking on a temporary basis (23.47.006 B8)**

In 2003, the Land Use Code was amended to allow parking to temporarily locate on a site where principal use parking is generally prohibited. This interim parking is allowed for up to two years if:

1. the parking had been accessory to an existing use that has gone away, or
2. if construction had begun on a project and it had to be temporarily halted.

This section does not apply to Station Area Overlays or in Pedestrian designated areas. The only other areas where principal use parking is prohibited are the NC1 zones.

Given the limited applicability of this provision, and the impact that using land for principal use parking lots can have on a small business district, other ways to provide flexibility for the use of parking lots are proposed. Current provisions allow the conversion of accessory use parking to principal use parking. Amendments are proposed to allow property owners to decide whether or not to allow the short-term use of accessory parking by the general public. This provides flexibility while ensuring that neighborhood business districts don't become park and ride lots.

## **2. Council Conditional Uses**

The following uses are permitted only after the City Council reviews the proposed use based on the Land Use Code's criteria.

### **Bus bases (23.47.006 C1)**

A bus base is a facility where buses are parked, repaired and dispatched. Bus bases in commercial

areas are limited to C1 and C2 zones, and to a maximum of 150 buses. Conditional use criteria applicable to bus bases are proposed to be simplified, and to allow flexibility for new or innovative strategies for meeting the intent of the conditions, without removing the primary conditions.

### **Work Release Centers (23.47.006 C3)**

Work release centers are alternatives to imprisonment, including pre-release and work release programs that are under the supervision of a court, or a federal, state or local agency. The conditions for siting work release centers are long and detailed and are proposed to be simplified without materially changing how work release centers are regulated.

## **Other Uses**

### **Background**

The Land Use Code contains use regulations that are repeated in many chapters. The same rules governing *cemeteries* (23.47.004 H) and the accessory uses, *keeping of animals* (23.47.026) and *home occupations* (23.46.025), are repeated in a number of places and can be consolidated without any substantive changes to how these uses are regulated.

### **Recommendation**

Simplify and shorten the Land Use Code by consolidating rules regarding the *keeping of animals*, *home occupations* and *cemeteries* in one location, Chapter 23.42 General Use Provisions. Duplicative language would be removed from the Single Family, Multi-family and Commercial chapters of the code, and anywhere else it occurs. No substantive changes are proposed to these regulations.

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## Residential Uses in Commercial Areas

### Background

The primary intent of commercial areas is to provide goods, services and employment for the residents of Seattle. However, the City's Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that housing is an important component of a commercial district:

Policy LU111 Allow residential use in commercial areas to encourage housing in close proximity to shopping, services and employment opportunities. Encourage residential uses in and near pedestrian-oriented commercial areas to provide housing close to employment and services.

Seattle currently has over 21,000 residential units in its commercial zones, eight percent of the city's housing stock. Gross housing density in commercial areas is approximately 7.5 units per acre. Almost 5,000 of those units are new units built since 1994. Residential uses in commercial areas are generally limited to mixed-use buildings in the NC and C1 zones. Residential-only buildings and residential uses in C2 zones are rarely permitted, and only under strict conditions.

Allowing housing in and near commercial areas has many benefits:

- ♦ Residents are generally able to walk to stores and services, and sometimes to work. This reduces car trips, the need for parking spaces, and congestion. It also provides an incentive for residents to walk, with related health benefits.
- ♦ Residents in commercial areas provide “eyes on the street.” They are in the district at night, and are more likely to see and report unlawful behavior, when businesses are closed. Similarly, residents gain safety from activity within the business district, and the proximity of business owners, employees and patrons in the evening.
- ♦ Residents in or near a business district leads to more pedestrian activity. Pedestrian activity can attract additional clients to local businesses. People like to be where other people are.
- ♦ Finally, housing in business areas reduces pressure for new housing in single-family zoned areas.

Currently, the Commercial Land Use Code separates residential buildings into two categories: *mixed-use* and *single-purpose residential* (SPR) buildings. A mixed-use building is defined as a building (or potentially a larger development site) that combines both residential units and commercial space that meets specific standards for height, depth and transparency at the street level, among others. A single-purpose residential structure is a building or site that only contains residential uses, or contains a commercial space that doesn't meet the specified street-level standards.

There are two different ways that the Land Use Code currently encourages mixed-use development where residential development is proposed in a commercial zone.

1. In most zones mixed-use development is permitted outright, but SPR development is only permitted as a conditional use. These conditions allow SPR buildings only on sites “not suited for commercial development” in areas where “there is substantial excess supply of land available for commercial use.” These criteria were believed necessary to ensure that housing development didn't displace commercial uses, neglecting to acknowledge the synergy of both uses in close proximity or the harm of long-term commercial vacancies.
2. SPR development in commercial areas is subject to a residential density limit (a ratio of units permitted to the square feet of the parcel being developed.) Residential space in a mixed-use project is not subject to a density limit. Residen-

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tial densities are instead determined by market demand and the permitted size of the building.

The combination of conditional use criteria and density limits has resulted in a strong preference for constructing mixed-use buildings, and Seattle has been one of the most successful cities in the nation in encouraging the construction of mixed-use buildings. Approximately 42% of new buildings in commercial areas over the last ten years have been mixed-use structures, 7% have been single-purpose residential buildings. The other 51% of new buildings have not contained any residential units.

Seattle's success at encouraging mixed-use buildings has sometimes resulted in the creation of commercial spaces that sit vacant for long periods of time. It is not uncommon to see a mixed-use building in Seattle that long ago sold or leased all of its residential units, but still has vacant storefronts. Rather than encouraging a healthy commercial environment, these vacant ground floor spaces often create "dead spaces" that may discourage pedestrians or discourage businesses from moving into a neighborhood.

Sometimes developers build mixed-use buildings in locations and markets where there may not be sufficient market demand for new commercial space. This can occur if the site does not meet conditional use criteria for a residential-only building, or when a developer expects that demand for residential units alone will support a mixed-use project and thereby avoiding residential density limits. If the residential units in a building can command a high enough sales price or rent, the developer does not necessarily need to rent or sell the commercial space in order to profit and satisfy lenders. In six neighborhood business districts surveyed in the summer of 2004, all had vacancy rates for street-level commercial spaces that were between 7% and 15% of the number of total businesses within all existing buildings.

## Recommendations

As a result of the unanticipated impact of the incentives for mixed-use buildings in commercial areas, it is proposed that the SPR density limits and conditional use criteria be repealed and that Pedestrian districts be expanded to help ensure services are available in core areas where most appropriate. The benefits of mixed-use buildings occur when neighborhoods as a whole contain a mix of uses. Residential buildings in mixed-use neighborhoods can fill in spaces at the edge of a business district, or in business districts that have more space for commercial uses than the market currently demands. Generally commercial spaces can command higher rents and longer leases than residential spaces, if they are sited and designed appropriately, and there is a market for commercial space.

With twenty years of experience with mixed-use development, many developers in Seattle are now used to developing mixed-use buildings and are likely to continue to build them when and where the market demands it. Developers of commercial space, where the market will bear it, are likely to be willing to pay more for a site in a commercial area. Commercial space will still be required at street level in areas mapped with a Pedestrian designation, where street level retail environments are desired.

As shown in Chapter 4: Development Standards, under "Height, Bulk and Scale," allowing residential uses at street level without density limits will result in a minimal increase in the amount of residential units that are permitted in a particular building. However, there is the potential that allowing residential uses more broadly will result in the development of residential space rather than commercial space throughout Seattle's commercial areas. While recent development in commercial areas has been generally split evenly between projects with residential space and projects without residential space, there is the possibility that this could shift with a broader allowance of residential uses.

**Table 3:  
Maximum Potential Impact of Allowing Street-Level Residential Uses**

Area with Employment Growth Target and Commercial Zoning	Current Employment Capacity (jobs)	"Worst Case" Employment Capacity (jobs)	Job Target 2004-2024	Target as % of "Worst Case" Capacity
Urban Centers	162,747	150,619	61,125	41%
1 <sup>st</sup> Hill/Capitol Hill Urban Center	9,312	7,221	4,600	64%
12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	1,605	943	700	74%
Capitol Hill	2,147	1,429	900	63%
First Hill	2,811	2,658	2,000	75%
Pike/Pine	2,749	2,191	1,000	46%
Downtown Urban Center	89,122	87,535	29,015	33%
Chinatown/International District	6,870	5,283	2,000	38%
Northgate Urban Center	22,429	21,209	4,220	20%
South Lake Union Urban Center	22,298	21,678	16,000	74%
University Community Urban Center	13,543	9,968	6,140	62%
University District Northwest	7,742	4,821	2,640	55%
Ravenna	5,801	5,022	500	10%
Uptown Urban Center	6,043	3,008	1,150	38%
Hub Urban Villages	61,640	49,180	4,450	9%
Ballard	8,750	5,610	750	13%
Bitter Lake Village	26,710	26,710	750	3%
Fremont	2,234	1,825	800	44%
Lake City	6,896	4,188	650	16%
North Rainier	10,244	6,952	750	11%
West Seattle Junction	6,806	3,895	750	19%
Seattle Citywide	318,141	274,729	84,000	31%

Note: "Worst Case" assumes that all commercial parcels that could potentially be developed with residential-only structures (NC2, NC3 and C1 parcels outside of Pedestrian designations, in areas with height limits of 65 feet or lower, not in the Bitter Lake Village or Lake City urban villages) are developed with residential-only buildings.



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Assuming that three-quarters of commercially zoned parcels in areas where street level residential uses would be permitted would be developed with residential-only buildings, there would still be significant capacity for employment in Seattle and the City would be able to accommodate all of its growth targets under the Comprehensive Plan (see Table 3.)

While allowing residential uses at street level might decrease capacity for commercial development and employment citywide, Seattle is likely to continue to have significant capacity for employment growth into the future. The Comprehensive Plan indicates that job estimates cannot exceed 80% of capacity. In no area would this threshold be met.

Allowing residential-only buildings in commercial areas more broadly will require a number of amendments to the Land Use Code:

### ***1. Mixed use standards***

Standards that currently only apply to street-level commercial space in mixed-use buildings are proposed to be applied to street-level commercial space in all Neighborhood Commercial zones. These standards help to create usable and flexible commercial spaces. See discussion of street level development standards in Chapter 4: Development Standards.

### ***2. Conditional use criteria***

Because residential uses would be permitted outright in NC2, NC3, and C1 zones, except at street level in pedestrian districts, conditional use criteria for single-purpose residential buildings will be deleted.

### ***3. Residential use in NC1 zones***

The conditional use criteria that currently restrict SPR development in commercial areas currently make it very difficult to site an SPR development in an NC1 zone. Only one SPR project was built in NC1 zones between 1996 and 2002. The NC1 zone is Seattle's smallest-scale commercial zone. NC1

is intended to provide small commercial spaces to serve surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods.

In many NC1 areas, because of surrounding zoning and the small amount of land zoned NC1, the development of a multi-family structure on an NC1 zoned lot may result in loss of commercial uses that serve surrounding residents. Consequently, it is proposed that residential-only buildings be permitted in NC1 zones only on sites that are not adjacent to an arterial. Non-residential uses will be required at street level adjacent to an arterial. This will allow for commercial spaces on sites that are most likely to succeed commercially – those sites with the best visibility – and allow appropriate residential development on sites that are less likely to succeed commercially.

### ***4. Neighborhood plan direction on appropriate locations for Single Purpose Residential development***

During the neighborhood planning process of the late 1990s, some neighborhoods recommended allowing or prohibiting SPR development in parts of their neighborhood business district. Most of these neighborhoods proposed to allow SPR development more generally, consistent with the proposed amendments. Because residential-only structures are proposed to be permitted outright in most areas, these maps are no longer needed. One block where SPR development is currently permitted outright is proposed to be mapped with a P designation. See the Rezone Analysis Director's Report discussion of the proposed Columbia City rezone for analysis of this block.

Four neighborhoods proposed restricting SPR development in specific areas. Legislation is before the City Council for rezones for South Lake Union and Wallingford, which would either add a Pedestrian designation to the areas where SPR is currently prohibited, or change the zoning to a non-Commercial zone. Two neighborhoods, Lake City and Bitter Lake

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Village, called for prohibiting SPR completely. In these areas, SPR will continue to be prohibited.

## **5. Single Purpose Residential structure provisions in overlays**

Three of the City's overlay districts modify requirements related to single purpose residential buildings in commercial zones. These provisions are proposed to be amended to be consistent with the proposed changes to the base zoning.

- ◆ Station Area Overlays allow SPR development without a conditional use and without density limits, these changes would be made to all commercial zones, and this section of the code can be deleted.
- ◆ The Northgate Overlay specifies that SPR development should be a conditional use using the current conditions in the Commercial chapter of the code. The conditional use criteria from the commercial chapter will be moved to the Northgate Overlay.
- ◆ The Pike/Pine Overlay allows SPR structures on most streets in the neighborhood. There is currently an incentive that allows SPR development without a density limit if a structure contains housing affordable to lower income households. Because SPR structures in all other commercial areas will not have a density limit, these provisions would, in the future, provide a disincentive to develop housing in Pike/Pine. They are therefore proposed to be removed.

## **6. Other areas where Single Purpose Residential development is prohibited**

In addition to the Lake City and Bitter Lake Village hub urban villages, residential-only buildings are currently prohibited in commercial areas with height limits over 65 feet. Because these are the City's densest commercial districts, generally surrounded by multifamily areas, it is appropriate to continue to require commercial uses at street-level in these areas.

## **7. Low-Income housing at street level**

Currently, the Land Use Code allows street-level residential uses for low-income housing that received monetary commitments from state or federal sources in the late 1980s. Instead of this narrow provision, it is proposed to generally allow street-level residential uses in commercial areas, except when abutting an arterial, in which case the other restrictions listed above would apply. Low income housing projects are not able to offset commercial vacancies with higher residential rents or sales prices, the same way that market rate housing can. It continues to make sense to provide flexibility for these projects, as long as they do not conflict with other City goals, such as encouraging continuous retail environments in areas with a Pedestrian designation.

## **8. Residential uses in Commercial 2 zones**

The C2 zone is the only zone where residential uses are conditional uses whether they are part of a mixed use building or not. C2 zones are the most auto-oriented zones and are non-retail in character. In this zone uses most likely to conflict with housing are permitted. It is proposed that housing remain a conditional use in this zone, but that the criteria be slightly amended in order to:

- ◆ Emphasize that the purpose of regulating residential uses as a conditional use in the C2 zone is to discourage conflicts between residential and intensive non-residential uses;
- ◆ Better define terms; and
- ◆ Use conditions that can be consistently applied.

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## Street Level Uses in Pedestrian Designated Zones

### Background

As a result of the proposed changes to more widely allow residential uses at street level in commercial areas, Pedestrian-designated areas will be the only commercial areas where street level commercial uses will be required. A Pedestrian designation will identify a “commercial core” for a neighborhood where supportive retail and other uses with pedestrian interest may be found. This is not a new role for Pedestrian designations, which have always served to emphasize a retail street-level environment. Both current Pedestrian (P1 and P2) designations require that one of the following uses occupy at least 80% of the width of the street-level facade of buildings along identified principal pedestrian streets:

- ◆ *Personal and household retail sales and service*
- ◆ *Eating and drinking establishments*
- ◆ *Customer service offices*
- ◆ *Entertainment uses*
- ◆ *Pet grooming*
- ◆ *Public library*
- ◆ *Public schools*

Each of these uses attracts pedestrian activity. When concentrated in a business district, they create an environment where pedestrians may visit multiple businesses.

### Recommendations

Some uses that are not currently permitted at street level in Pedestrian designated zones could foster similar pedestrian activity in these areas. Because the Pedestrian designation is proposed to be mapped in more neighborhoods, it is advisable to broaden the uses that would be permitted there to reflect a

wider range of commercial environments. A number of uses that seemed most likely to contribute to a vibrant pedestrian environment and were considered for these areas are presented in Table 4.

Pedestrian designations also currently prohibit auto-oriented uses such as gas stations and car washes; these prohibitions are proposed to remain.

## Maximum size of use

### Overview

Most uses are subject to a maximum size limit in some commercial zones. These limits are intended to meet four goals:

1. Ensure that the scale of uses is compatible with the character and function of the commercial area.
2. Encourage uses likely to draw significant traffic to an area to locate where traffic impacts can best be handled.
3. Promote compatible land use and transportation patterns; and
4. Foster healthy commercial development.

Under the current system, new businesses in the NC1, NC2 and/or NC3 zones are subject to one size of use limit. Existing businesses may expand to a higher size limit (see Table 5). For example, a retail store in an NC1 zone is limited to 4,000 square feet. If the business stays in the same space for a period of time, it may be permitted to expand to 10,000 square feet. However, if it moves, a new retail business could not occupy all of those 10,000 square feet. Instead, it would be limited to 4,000 square feet.

These limits help to protect the character of the lower intensity commercial areas, and allowing existing businesses to expand is a way to support small businesses. However, the result has been that some spaces become difficult to lease unless they can be divided into smaller spaces. For example, a 9,000 square foot building in the Madrona neighborhood was previously occupied by a school. Once

**Table 4:**  
**Uses Considered to be Allowed at Street Level under the P designation**

Use	Recommended at street-level in P-designated areas?	Discussion
Community clubs and centers	Yes	<i>Community clubs and centers</i> see activity throughout the day, and can support business districts by drawing people to the district. These institutional uses are similar to entertainment uses, which are permitted in P-designated areas.
Lodging	Yes	<i>Lodging</i> uses (hotels, bed and breakfasts) bring new visitors and to a business district. People staying in a hotel are likely to visit surrounding businesses, creating pedestrian activity. Lobbies and other semi-public spaces are most likely to occupy street level spaces.
Medical services	Yes	<i>Medical services</i> uses are higher activity uses, with patients coming and going throughout the day.
Museums	Yes	<i>Museums</i> are not likely to be frequently added to business districts. However, when they are created, they can draw new visitors to a business district.
Parks and Open Space	Yes	<i>Parks</i> attract activity throughout the day, and can support business districts. New parks are not likely to be frequently added.
Religious Facilities	Yes	<i>Religious institutions</i> appear to be required under the Federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act in areas where other types of uses where people congregate are permitted.
School, Elementary or Secondary	Yes	<i>Public schools</i> are currently permitted in Pedestrian districts. <i>Private schools</i> create similar amounts of activity and are equally appropriate.
Child care centers	No	While child care centers can provide significant activity at key points during the day – especially in the morning, evening and at lunch time – during most of the day they do not encourage pedestrians. Because of safety concerns, child care centers tend to close their blinds during the day, discouraging pedestrian activity and interest.
Offices	No	As proposed to be defined, <i>office</i> uses will generally not have walk-in visitors during the course of the day. While they are a valuable component of business district, they are often not appropriate at street level at the heart of a business district. Employees generally do not want to have desks adjacent to street level windows. Other common office spaces (conference rooms, break rooms.) are also either vacant, or will have their blinds drawn.
Non-household retail sales and services	No	These uses, which have businesses, institutions and government agencies as their customers, like <i>office and restaurant supply stores</i> and <i>blueprint companies</i> , have many fewer customers who are pedestrians than retail sales and service uses that serve the general public.



**Table 5: Current Maximum Size Limits**

Use	NC1		NC2		NC3	
	New Business	Existing Business	New Business	Existing Business	New Business	Existing Business
Most non-residential uses	4,000	10,000	15,000	25,000	No Limit	
Multi-purpose Retail	10,000		50,000	50,000	No Limit	
Medical Services	10,000		15,000	25,000	No Limit	
Food processing and craft work	4,000	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	20,000
Indoor participant sports and recreation	4,000	10,000	15,000	25,000	25,000	
Light manufacturing	Not permitted		5,000	10,000	10,000	20,000
Wholesale showroom	Not Permitted		Not Permitted		15,000	20,000
Mini-Warehouse	Not Permitted		Not Permitted		15,000	20,000
Sales, service and rental of commercial equipment and construction materials	Not Permitted		Not Permitted		25,000	
Passenger terminals	Not Permitted		Not Permitted		25,000	
Fuel Sales	Not Permitted		Not Permitted		No Limit	

the school left, it has been difficult to find a new use to fill the space, because most new uses are limited to 4,000 square feet and would not be allowed to occupy the entire existing space. The rules also force some business owners to jump over two hurdles if they wish to occupy more than 4,000 square feet in a new space: one permit to establish the business, and another to expand it.

## Recommendation

In order to promote healthier business districts, it is proposed that the limits that apply only to new businesses be eliminated, and that the higher limits that currently apply to existing businesses be used for all businesses (see Table 6). This will allow for more flexibility in the use of existing buildings, without increasing the total amount of business square footage that could potentially locate on a site. Some business districts may see additional businesses with spaces at the upper end of the maximum size limit,

but businesses would not be out of scale and function with their neighborhood.

It is also recommended that the regulations governing how size-of-use limits are calculated be simplified. Currently businesses with more than one principal use (for instance, a woodworking shop with a retail store selling wooden furniture in front) are limited to the maximum size of any single use within the business. Businesses that wish to co-locate different operations are penalized compared to the same uses in the same place owned by different businesses. If a different business owned the furniture store in the example above, it would not have the same limit. The proposed code, instead limits the size of each principal use within a business to the maximum size limit for that use. Businesses with multiple uses that are comprised of a principal and accessory use (a restaurant with a cocktail lounge, for example) would be limited to the maximum for the principal use.

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**Table 6: Proposed Maximum Size Limits**

Use	NC1	NC2	NC3
	New and Existing Businesses	New and Existing Businesses	New and Existing Businesses
Most non-residential uses (including Medical Services, Indoor sports and recreation)	10,000	25,000	No Limit
Multi-purpose Retail	10,000	50,000	No Limit
Food processing and craft work	10,000	25,000	25,000
Light manufacturing	Not Permitted	10,000	25,000
Wholesale showroom, Warehouse, Mini-Warehouse, Heavy Commercial Sales (Fuel sales, commercial equipment and construction materials), and Passenger terminals	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	25,000

## Chapter 4: Development Standards

### Summary of Development Standard Recommendations

1. Control building bulk with floor area ratios to allow greater design flexibility to encourage wider sidewalks, plazas, ground-level open spaces or view corridors.
  - ◆ Replace current 64 percent upper-level lot coverage limitation for residential development with floor area ratio (FAR) limits for all uses.
  - ◆ Allow additional FAR when higher densities will help to meet other City and neighborhood objectives, such as focusing development around station areas and in revitalization areas, or as an incentive for mixed-use development.
  - ◆ Eliminate current residential density limits for residential buildings.
2. Encourage pedestrian-oriented commercial spaces.
  - ◆ Expand current Pedestrian designation façade and parking location requirements to all NC zones.
  - ◆ Limit the setback of buildings from the sidewalk.
  - ◆ Prohibit parking between a building and the street and at corners.
  - ◆ Reduce blank walls along the street.
  - ◆ Maintain minimum commercial space standards to support the viability of street-level businesses.
  - ◆ Limit the number of driveways across sidewalks.
  - ◆ Adopt street-front design guidelines.
  - ◆ In auto-oriented areas, require pedestrian pathways from adjacent sidewalks, through parking lots, to large retail establishments.
3. Encourage housing at street-level to enhance the pedestrian environment, in non-Pedestrian designated areas.
  - ◆ Encourage visually prominent residential entrances, such as "grand stairways" or stoops through Design Review.
  - ◆ Use basic setback or ground floor height above sidewalk standards to help ensure resident privacy.
  - ◆ Allow a small height increase to accommodate well-designed residential streetfronts and privacy.
4. Revise requirements for residential amenities (currently called "open space.")
  - ◆ Require residential amenity areas in an amount equal to at least 10 percent of the gross floor area of residential use, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the lot area.
  - ◆ A maximum of 50 percent of on-site amenity area may be enclosed.
  - ◆ A maximum of 50 percent of the amenity area may be met off-site, by either constructing the amenity or by making a payment in lieu to the City for park improvements near the project.

# Bulk and Density Controls

## Background

In most commercially-zoned areas, all floors above the ground floor in a building containing residential units are limited to 64% of the area of the lot on which the building is located (see the Background Report for more information). While the purpose of the 64% requirement was to regulate bulk, it effectively imposes a limit on residential density, as it does not dictate the distribution of the bulk of upper stories, or their ultimate appearance. The requirement does not apply to commercial (office) uses, and it allows upper stories to be built to the lot line, with a light- or air- well or courtyard consuming the other 36% of the upper stories. Design review is able to waive some or all of the upper-story lot coverage limit. The 64% limit is the standard that is the most frequently waived during design review, with over a third of all projects receiving a waiver from the limit.

The Background Report describes current code requirements that limit bulk and density: lot coverage, setbacks, maximum density limits, and Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR). This analysis primarily examines FAR as an effective tool to meet the goals of the Neighborhood Business District Strategy.

FAR is the ratio of gross floor area in a building to the total area of land on which it is built. If a one-story building takes up an entire lot, it has an FAR

of 1:1 or 1.0. If it were a two-story building, its FAR would be 2:1 or 2.0. A two-story building occupying half of a lot has an FAR of 1.0.

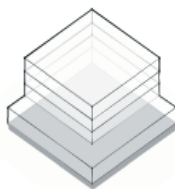
FAR currently applies in commercial zones that allow greater than 65 feet in height, as well as in downtown and industrial zones. FAR is used by many jurisdictions to regulate bulk and density in urban areas.

## Existing Regulations’ FAR Equivalents

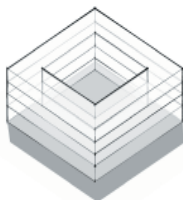
An examination of the 64% limit on residential upper-story lot coverage shows that equivalent FARs can be achieved. Appendix IV summarizes the FAR equivalent of three different Neighborhood Commercial zones with different height designations. The 30-foot and 40-foot height limit zones allow a 4-foot height bonus for new mixed-use buildings, and a 7-foot bonus for mixed-use buildings with a grocery store. These height allowances are intended to accommodate a taller floor-to-ceiling height for the ground floor, but not to allow additional floors beyond that which may normally be expected to be achieved in these height limits: three stories in a 30-foot zone, four stories in a 40-foot zone.

As Appendix IV shows, assuming that typical floor-to-ceiling heights are used, mixed use structures in 30, 40, and 65-foot zones have equivalent FARs of 2.28, 2.92, and 4.2, respectively. A result of the current regulations is that the allowed FAR for a commercial-only structure is higher than that of

### Allowed by existing code

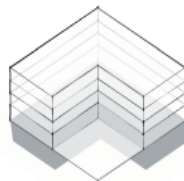


Typical building form: podium above lot line-to-lot line first floor

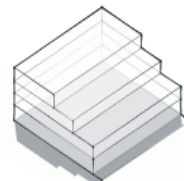


Interior courtyard with exterior walls built to the lot line

### Not allowed by existing code



Ground level plaza with upper stories covering more than 64% of lot



Terraced upper floors with any one upper floor covering more than 64% of lot

mixed use buildings. This higher FAR is mostly theoretical; in practice, most new commercial-only buildings rarely achieve the greater amounts of development capacity allowed.

Buildings meeting mixed-use standards in 85-foot zones -- with 64% upper story lot coverage, and a 13-foot minimum ground floor height -- could have a maximum FAR of 6.12. This assumes residential floor-floor heights of 9 feet, which is on the low side for new construction. However, structures built in this height limit are currently subject to a maximum FAR of 6.0, and a lower FAR limit of 4.5 for any single use, including residential, within a mixed use structure.

The existing FAR limits in the 85, 125, and 160-foot height limits are lower for buildings that do not contain a mix of uses. Those same limits also apply to any one individual use within the building. They essentially allow the same amount of residential density in the 125- and 160-foot height limits, and only 0.5 FAR less residential density in the 85-foot height limit. No changes to the existing FAR limits or requirements for ground-floor commercial uses in these taller height limit zones are proposed.

### **Current FAR Limits for Higher Height Zones**

Structures higher than 65 feet	85' Height Limit Zones	125' Height Limit Zones	160' Height Limit Zones
Mixed-Use structure	6	6	7
Any single use within a mixed-use structure	4.5	5	5
Single-purpose structure total	4.5	5	5

### **Limits on the bulk of upper stories maintained with FAR**

The use of FAR could still limit the amount of upper-story bulk that a structure may have, as long as the FAR is smaller than the envelope expected for that height limit. For instance, in a 40-foot

zone, an FAR of 4.0 or 4:1 would allow lot-line to lot-line construction for four full stories. On a 10,000 square foot lot, it allows a 40,000 square foot building. Fully commercial buildings, such as office buildings, could theoretically build a 4 FAR building today. However, these uses prefer to occupy floors with ceilings that are higher than 10 feet, which means that four floors can not fit within 40 feet. A maximum FAR of 3 in the 40-foot height limit, is proposed, which means only a three-story building could be built covering the entire parcel. A structure with four stories and equal footprints on each floor could only occupy 75% of the lot.

As previously noted, under today's regulations, a first floor may be built to all lot lines so long as the site is not adjacent to a residential zone, but upper stories are limited to 64% of the lot if they include residential uses. On a 10,000 square foot lot, three residential stories of 6,400 feet each are allowed on a 10,000 square foot commercial base, totaling 29,200 square feet. This is equivalent to an FAR of 2.92.

An FAR of 3.0 (3:1) in a 40-foot zone would allow a 30,000 square foot building on a 10,000 square foot lot. Assuming typical design and not an inverted pyramidal base (such as the Rainier Tower downtown), this could equate to 7,500 square feet per floor. On the floors above the ground level, this is about 11% more floor area in upper stories than what is allowed now – but it also means that 2,500 square feet of space at the ground level could be used for wider sidewalks, open space for building tenants, or plaza space, elements that design guidelines and the Design Review process emphasize in appropriate locations.

Another option under FAR is that a lot-line to lot-line building in a 40-foot zone could be built to three stories, instead of four with setbacks. While this would equate to up to 36% more floor area in the second and third stories than today's development, the reduction of a full story could also mean less expensive construction, less shadow, more sunlight, and fewer views blocked.



## Recommendations

### 1. Set Maximum FARs for all Commercial Zone Height Limits

Recommended FARs closely match (by rounding to the nearest quarter percent) the amount of floor area currently allowed in the three lower height limits (30, 40, and 65 feet) with the 64% residential upper story lot coverage limit. This is approximately equivalent to the “FAR for a single use” line, below:

**Table 7:  
Proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**

Height Limit (feet)	30	40	65	85	125	160
FAR for structures with both residential and nonresidential uses	2.5	3.25	4.75	6	6	7
FAR for single use	2.25	3	4.25	4.5	5	5

An important difference between the 64% lot coverage limit and FAR is that Design Review would not be permitted to allow a project to depart from FAR limits. Generally, departures for the upper-story lot coverage limit are not beyond 75% upper story lot coverage. In order to allow development at the amount that is currently achieved by many buildings through the Design Review program, and to provide an incentive for mixed-use development, it is proposed that buildings containing both residential and nonresidential uses be allowed an FAR equivalent to a 75% upper-story lot coverage.

Finally, the existing code does not include parking when limiting floor area with FARs in the higher height limit zones. This encourages both more above-grade parking and bulkier buildings. It is recommended that above-grade parking be counted as part of the calculation of FAR, in order to limit the overall bulk of buildings and to encourage parking to be built below grade.

### 2. Allow Additional FAR in Specified Areas

The upper-story lot coverage limit has been removed within the Station Area Overlay district. A proposal to remove the upper-story lot coverage limit for housing revitalization areas is currently under review. FAR limits are proposed that allow the same amount of development that is currently permitted in these areas without the upper-story lot coverage limit:

**Table 8:  
Proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR)  
in Station Area Overlay Districts and  
Specified Revitalization Areas**

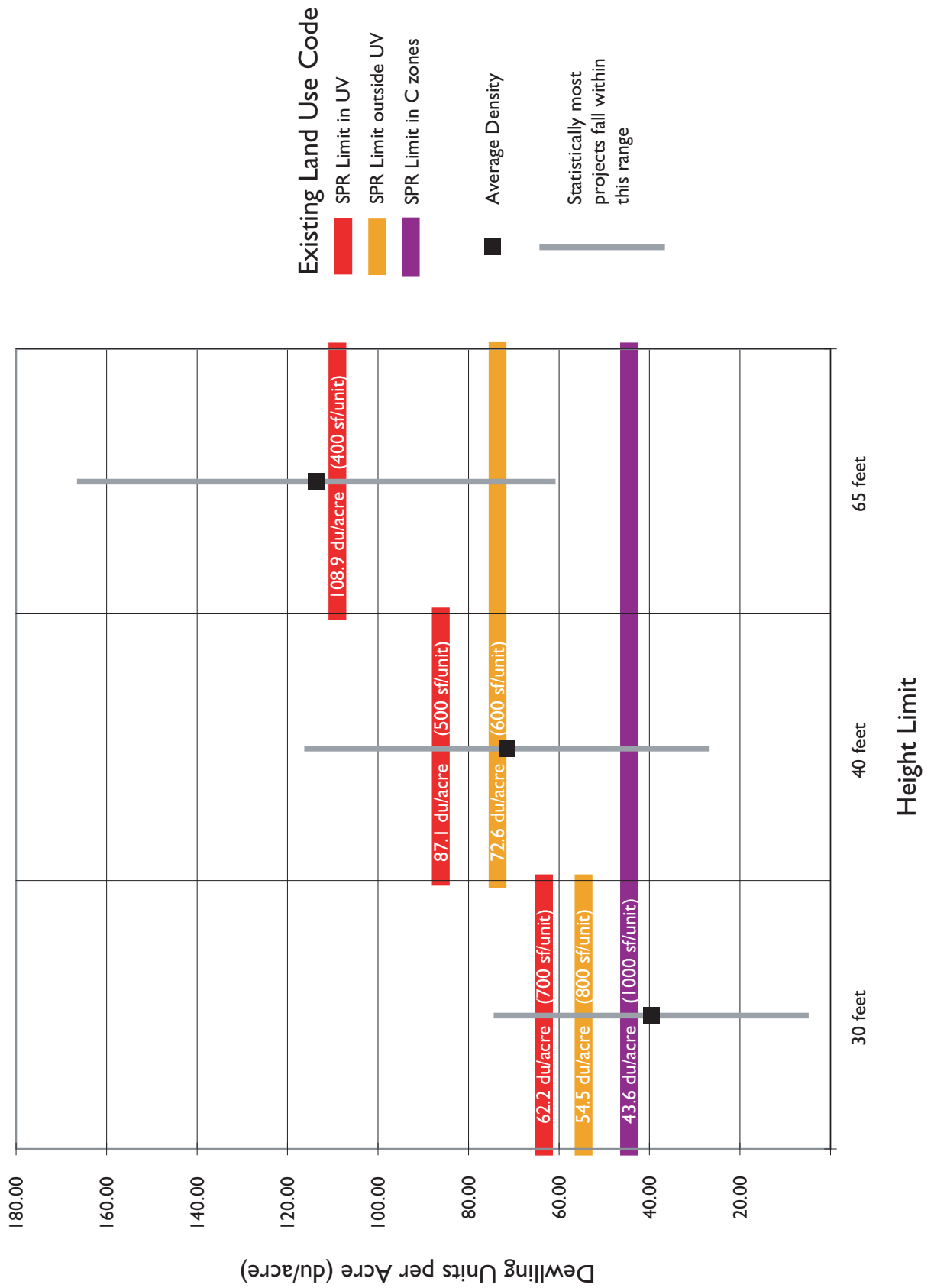
Height Limit (feet)	30	40	65	85	125	160
FAR for structures with both residential and nonresidential uses	3	4	5.75	6	6	7
FAR for single use	3	4	5.75	4.5	5	5

### 3. Replace Residential Density Limits with FAR limits

One of the key aspects of the Neighborhood Business District Strategy is to be more flexible about street-level uses, particularly residential, outside retail cores that are established by existing or new Pedestrian designations. The intent of this recommendation is primarily to ensure more active and vibrant street fronts, particularly in places where there is not a strong market for commercial uses. To implement the recommendation, two changes to the code are proposed:

- ◆ Permit residential uses at street level in most commercial zones, and
- ◆ Remove the limits on residential density for non-mixed use buildings.

# Mixed Use Residential Densities and Single Purpose Residential Density Limits Mixed Use Projects built 1995-2002



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The first proposed change is discussed at length in Chapter 3: Uses. The second is intended to remove a mostly unused portion of the Land Use Code and a contributing factor to vacant commercial space in business districts: residential density limits in place now for non-mixed use structures.

Because there is no residential density limit on mixed-use buildings, most development containing residential units in commercial zones is mixed-use, with commercial space at ground floor and residential above. Looking at mixed-use projects built between 1995 and 2002, the median residential density has been fairly on par with the density limits in place for “single purpose residential” development. In 30 and 40-foot height limits, most of the mixed-use development has residential densities at or below the single purpose residential limits. In the 65-foot zones, about half the projects’ densities have been higher, and half have been lower (see the chart on the previous page and Background Report Tables III-3 and III-4).

FAR would allow desirable building designs that are currently allowable only with design review departures, such as having “tiered” upper floors with any floor covering more than 64% of the lot. It can also encourage ground-level open spaces, where today’s regulations encourage lot-line to lot-line construction. Based on a review of the mixed-use projects built in the last seven years, FAR can also replace the density limits in place for fully residential projects, without resulting in a significantly greater amount of residential density. Additionally, when paired with design guidelines, it can allow new development that better meets neighborhoods’ goals.

## Street-level Requirements and Guidelines

### Background

In general, the Land Use Code addresses the basic structure of buildings: the allowed uses and their minimum or maximum allowed sizes, building setbacks, and vehicular and pedestrian entries. Design Review and design guidelines address the details: building materials, size and location of fenestration (windows), the placement of overhead weather protection (awnings).

The success of Seattle’s neighborhood business districts is due in part to how they are designed. Not only is the size and configuration of the sidewalk and street important to how the business district functions, but so are the relationship between buildings and building entrances to the sidewalk and design of street-facing façades.

The area where a sidewalk meets a building serves as the transition between public space and private space. Examples of design features that provide attractive and inviting transitions include large windows, recessed doorways, open plazas, or outdoor seating areas. In more residential areas appropriate transitions can be provided through the use of stoops, stairways, porches, or landscaped areas. In both cases, overhead weather protection (canopies or awnings) offers shelter from the elements, which can be important in rainy Seattle.

Because so many projects in commercial zones are subject to Design Review, a general goal of the Neighborhood Business District Strategy is to emphasize its role as an effective way to simplify the code. Much of the code was written before Design Review was implemented, and there are context-sensitive issues that are better addressed with design guidelines than the code itself.

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Three tools are currently used in shaping street level development in commercial areas: design guidelines, mixed-use development standards, and development standards for Pedestrian designations.

## ***1. Design Review & Design Guidelines***

The *Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings* (also referred to as the Citywide Guidelines) offer a flexible tool as an alternative to prescriptive zoning requirements. They guide the Design Review process, with the primary intent of allowing new development to better fit into the unique character of its surroundings.

Most projects in NC zones are reviewed by Design Review boards, because the thresholds are set very low, especially relative to multifamily zones. Projects in C1 and C2 zones outside of urban villages are not reviewed through the Design Review process, unless they abut a Single Family zone.

The current Citywide Guidelines cover a number of topics related to the street-level environment, including:

- ◆ Pedestrian open spaces and entrances,
- ◆ Blank walls,
- ◆ Design of parking, and
- ◆ Personal safety and security.

The Citywide Guidelines are Seattle's first, adopted in 1994. The City has since adopted Downtown design guidelines and several sets of neighborhood-specific design guidelines, which augment the original Citywide Guidelines. These new sets of guidelines, ten years of experience with design review, and case studies of successful and unsuccessful commercial-area design in Seattle have informed a number of areas where the current design guidelines could be augmented.

Design Review boards are able to recommend waivers of development standards when doing so could better meet the intent of the design guidelines.

The standards that are most commonly relaxed are upper story lot coverage requirements for residential uses (36% of projects) and open space requirements (31%). The next most frequent waivers are related to street level spaces: the amount of the street-front that is required to be in non-residential use (24%), parking driveway width and sight angles (24%) and first floor heights (16%).

## ***2. Mixed-use development standards***

The Land Use Code currently contains standards for street-level commercial spaces in mixed-use buildings that do not apply to other commercial spaces. These standards state:

- ◆ 80% of the width of a structure's street-facing façade must be occupied by non-residential uses;
- ◆ The non-residential uses must be an average of 30 and no less than 15 feet deep from the street-facing façade;
- ◆ The minimum height of the street-level floor must be 13 feet, measured floor-to-floor;
- ◆ A minimum of 51% of the street-front façade containing non-residential uses must be at or above sidewalk grade; and
- ◆ The entrance to required non-residential uses shall be no more than 3 feet above or below sidewalk grade.

The City provides incentives for projects to meet these standards:

- ◆ In the 30- and 40-foot height limits, projects that meet the 13-foot ground floor height requirement are allowed an extra 4 feet of height for the building. An extra 7 feet of height is allowed if a 16-foot ground floor is provided for a grocery store.
- ◆ In all commercial zones, projects meeting these standards are not subject to residential density limits.

While there is no specified limit on residential density for projects meeting these standards, other

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code requirements and factors play a role in how many residences actually get built. Among them is a limit on the amount of lot area that residential floors may cover, a significant requirement in the mixed-use development standards. This requirement and proposed amendments, are discussed above (see “Bulk and Density Controls” in this chapter).

Mixed-use requirements (other than building height) may be modified as development standard departures through Design Review, and the street-level space requirements are waived in approximately a quarter of all projects. Buildings that include commercial and residential uses, but do not meet standards for mixed-use are permitted, but are subject to residential density limits. Because the Neighborhood Business District Strategy recommends allowing residential uses more widely, the existing code’s underlying framework built around whether a structure is the “single purpose residential” will be changed (see “Residential Uses in Commercial Areas” in Chapter 3: Uses.)

### **3. Pedestrian designation development standards**

Development standards for Pedestrian-designated zones are intended to create attractive and safe street level pedestrian environments. They require that:

- ♦ 80% of the width of a structure’s street-facing façade must be occupied by a limited set of pedestrian-friendly retail uses (see Chapter 3: Uses).
- ♦ Street-facing facades cannot contain blank walls that are more than 30 feet wide and the total amount of blank façade cannot be more than 40% of the total façade. Portions between 2 and 8 feet above the sidewalk that are not transparent are considered blank.
- ♦ Required street-level uses must be no more than 10 feet from the street property line and must occupy the first 10 feet above the sidewalk.

- ♦ Parking must be behind, inside, or underneath buildings. In P2 designations, parking may also be located beside buildings.
- Access to parking must be from alleys or side streets, if present.

Generally, these standards may also be modified through the Design Review program.

## **Recommendations**

The mixed-use development standards are proposed to be replaced with street-level design standards, addressing both commercial and residential uses at street-level. Related standards also include provisions for surface parking, access and location to parking, drive-in or drive-through lanes, and landscaping and screening, located in different code sections.

### **1. New street-front standards**

Neighborhood Commercial zones are places where pedestrian-oriented commercial and mixed-use development is emphasized. From this perspective, development standards in these zones should support pedestrian orientation. Blank façade and parking location standards currently applicable in the Pedestrian-designated zones are recommended to become more widely applicable to all NC zones.

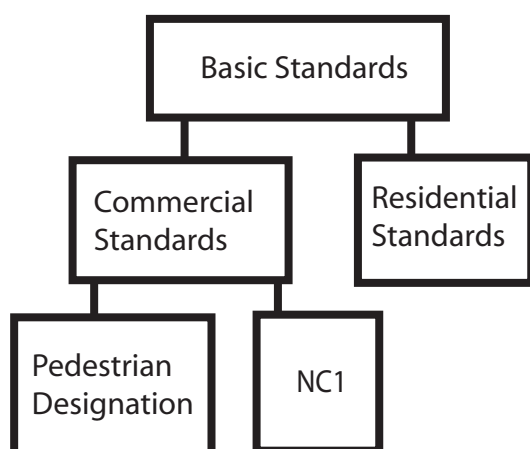
#### **Basic Standards: Preventing Blank Facades**

One of the primary intents of the proposed street-level development standards is to prevent blank facades along streetfronts. Blank façade restrictions are proposed to apply to all buildings in NC zones and buildings containing residential uses in C zones, or buildings in C zones that are across the street from residential zones.



Blank façades restrictions are proposed to be part of the basic standards that apply to all uses at street level. They would be limited to 20 feet in width (decreased from 30) in order to enhance the pedestrian environment. Several means will be allowed for meeting blank facade standards, including architectural features such as windows (including commercial transparency requirements), doorways, decks, and stoops. Where blank facades may be mitigated with vegetated screening and landscaping, it is recommended that native or non-invasive species be required, as opposed to existing requirements for “Ivy or similar plantings.”

### Structure of Proposed Street-level Development Standards



### Commercial Space Standards

A transparency requirement is proposed in conjunction with blank façade restrictions for street-front commercial uses. The standard will require that a minimum of 60% of the width of facades enclosing commercial uses be transparent between 2 and 8 feet above sidewalks.

Current mixed-use rules require a 13 foot floor-to-floor height and 30 foot average depth to help ensure that commercial spaces in new development are viable for a variety of businesses. It is recommended that they be required as a standard for all new commercial development, whether in mixed-use

or commercial-only buildings in the Neighborhood Commercial 1, 2, and 3 zones, and in mixed-use buildings in Commercial 1 and 2 zones.

A review of the floor-floor heights found in the building plans for several commercial-only projects built in Seattle found that the average height is 14.1 feet. The median height was 13 feet, the lowest was 11.9 feet and the highest was 18 feet. Most commercial uses need or desire taller floor-to-ceiling heights. Requiring a minimum of 13 feet for street-level spaces would establish a reasonable minimum standard, and Design Review would allow for departures when warranted.

The 30-foot average depth requirement can be waived or modified through the Design Review process. In addition, the commercial area is never required to occupy more than 50% of the street level space, providing flexibility for shallow lots.

### New Street-level Residential Standards

A key difference between residential and commercial (particularly retail) uses is that one needs privacy while the other needs transparency. Consequently, buildings with street-level residential uses will have some different requirements than buildings with street-level commercial spaces at the street-level.

Residences require privacy. Grade or elevation differences and setbacks between the sidewalk and residences will be required to help add both privacy and visual interest for passing pedestrians. Requiring residential floors to be above the street level or set back from the street will provide privacy to residents while encouraging more “eyes on the street” and thereby safer pedestrian and business environments.

Requiring at least one visually prominent pedestrian-oriented entry on the street-facing façade is proposed to help ensure that new development with residential uses at ground level is engaging and interactive for passers-by, not just a featureless blank wall. As with commercial uses, blank facades will not be allowed along street fronts, and can be treated with residential

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windows, entryways, stairs, stoops, decks, balconies, and landscaping, all elements that provide visual interest.

Finally, revised design guidelines will help to promote more visual interest and façade features for residential streetfronts.

### **Modification of requirements for small projects**

The street level standards are able to be waived through the design review process when a waiver would allow better design of a structure. Although most projects in Commercial areas are subject to design review, very small projects are not required to go through the design review process. In order to allow for appropriate flexibility from the street level development standards, a new modification process is proposed for projects that are not subject to the design review process, generally residential structures with fewer than four units and non-residential structures that are less than 4,000 square feet. A new provision would allow DPD to modify the street level development standards if a modification of the standards will maintain the safety and aesthetics of the streetscape for pedestrians and:

1. Maintain pedestrian access to the structure,
2. Maintain urban form consistent with adjacent structures;
3. Maintain the visibility of nonresidential uses, or
4. Maintain the privacy of residential uses.

## **2. Height Exceptions**

Mixed-use buildings with tall first floor commercial spaces are currently permitted 4 or 7 feet of extra height in 30 and 40 foot height limits. This additional height allows a building to meet the 13-foot floor-to-floor requirement or to provide a 16-foot floor-to-floor space when a larger store such as a supermarket is proposed without losing a floor of

residential space. Without the extra 4 (for mixed use) or 7 (for grocery stores) feet, development with appropriate street level spaces in this zones would lose an entire floor. These height exceptions are only allowed if both residential and commercial uses are present in the building, a good incentive for housing and mixed-use development.

The primary purpose of the exception is to help ensure well-designed, viable ground floor spaces without compromising the number of floors ordinarily possible within the height limit. To maintain the existing entitlement granted by these height exceptions, it is recommended that they be maintained, but that the criteria under which they are allowed be changed:

1. A 13-foot ground floor still would be required for street-level commercial spaces (16 feet for grocery stores).
2. New development will not be able to meet this requirement and gain more floors than they would without the additional height.
3. The view protection criteria is proposed to be removed. Creative massing of a building through Design Review can provide view corridors to retain significant views while allowing additional height. Ways of mitigating view, light and shadow impacts are often considered during design and environmental review.
4. To qualify for the height exception today, a building must be mixed-use with residential floors above a tall commercial floor. However, to be more flexible about street-level residential spaces, it is recommended that the extra 4 feet of height be also granted in areas with 30- and 40-foot height limits when a residential entry is more than 4 feet from sidewalk grade and a stairway or stoop is provided. Offsetting residential floors from the sidewalk – placing them higher or lower than the sidewalk – is an effective way of creating the privacy that residents need without sacrificing a quality street environment. This will offer a regulatory

incentive for providing stoops or a difference in elevation. Once again, new design guidelines will help better shape the pedestrian environment for new development with street-level residential uses.

### 3. Parking Location and Design

In NC zones, it is recommended that parking be prohibited between new buildings and the street, with requirements similar to those used today in Pedestrian designated zones. Parking would be allowed next to buildings, except on corner lots adjacent to a side street. Parking would be permitted between two buildings. This addresses the goal of NC zones to provide for pedestrian-oriented commercial development.

It is also recommended that parking access provisions in the existing Pedestrian 2 designation apply more broadly to NC zones. These rules require parking access to be from an alley or side street when they are present and in good condition. This helps to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles. This rule also improves and maintains storefront continuity, a hallmark of a good pedestrian environment.

When at the street-level, parking is required to be set back 5 feet from both street and residentially-zoned lot lines. Screening and landscaping standards that are in place today will continue to apply – these screen new parking from adjacent residentially-zoned lots or the street when parking is adjacent to them. No changes are recommended to these standards.

In C1 and C2 zones, surface parking may be located between buildings and a street, but for buildings with more than 30,000 square feet of retail space, a pedestrian pathway through the parking lot is recommended to be required. The pathway would be required to be at least 5 feet wide and connect the sidewalk to the entry of the new building. One pathway will be required for every 50 parking spaces.

Other, more intensive types of uses, such as warehouses, that have fewer employees and do not have many customers coming and going throughout the day, are not subject to this requirement. The primary purpose behind this recommendation is to help provide a safe pedestrian passage for both customers and employees. A similar requirement is proposed for projects in NC zones with more than 50 spaces in surface parking.

### 4. Drive-ins and Drive-through Services

The existing code allows certain auto-oriented uses in NC zones, including gas stations and car washes (although car washes are not allowed in NC1). Drive-in and drive-through lanes are regulated as design features of a building. Screening and landscaping are required when new drive-in facilities are established.

The maximum number of lanes is limited based on the zone (see Table 9). In addition, banks and car washes are subject to a minimum and a maximum number of queuing spaces based on the number of lanes they provide.

No changes to the standards for drive-in lanes are recommended, other than creating a chart to describe the requirements and moving the conditions for drive-in lanes associated with restaurants in NC3 zones to the section on drive-ins.

**Table 9: Drive-in Lane Restrictions**

	Most Drive-in Businesses	Gas Station	Restaurants with drive-in lanes
P	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
NC1	Prohibited	4 lanes	Prohibited
NC2	2 lanes	4 lanes	Prohibited
NC3	4 lanes	4 lanes	4 lanes subject to specified conditions
C1 and C2	No limit	No limit	No limit

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## 5. Existing Buildings

The mixed-use development standards have been problematic for existing buildings. Because residential uses in buildings that do not meet the mixed-use standards are conditional uses, changing or expanding existing commercial buildings to include residential uses often requires a conditional use permit. This process is lengthier and more costly than a typical permit application for a change of use. Because the conditions were not written with existing buildings in mind, many projects that seek to add residential units to existing buildings can not meet the conditional use criteria. These applicants must try to modify their existing building to meet the commercial space standards. This can sometimes be very difficult or even financially impossible (particularly the 13 foot floor-to-floor standard or when a small number of units is proposed). The Uses section of this report also discusses obstacles for new businesses in existing buildings, a related matter.

There are several reasons why Seattle should be more flexible about development standards where existing buildings are concerned. First, the reuse of existing space is environmentally very positive; building materials and construction methods for new buildings require valuable resources, but less are required when adapting existing spaces. Second, allowing more housing within or as an addition to existing buildings is a positive way to provide more opportunities for people to live in and near our business districts, with less impact than new development. Maintaining old structures helps maintain the existing look and feel of a neighborhood or business district. The re-use of existing structures to provide more housing can help enliven business districts by bringing more potential customers into a business district. This type of adaptive re-use can also provide more affordable spaces for new businesses to locate.

It is recommended that street-level development standards not be required for existing buildings undergoing a change of use or for existing com-

mercial buildings that are adding residential units. If substantial renovation of an existing structure's street-front façade is proposed, then the blank façade and transparency provisions will apply.

## 6. Development Standard Departures

One of the benefits of the Design Review program is that it allows for departures from or modifications to development standards when doing so would better meet the intent of the design guidelines. This allows appropriate oversight over development, while allowing flexibility for new development. The current Land Use Code lists the development standards that can be departed from through Design Review, providing a long list of 21 different development standards that can be waived. It is proposed that the list be changed, so that development standards that can not be modified are instead listed. The list of 21 standards can be replaced with a list of eight development standards (see Table 10: Proposed Development Standards That Cannot be Modified).

## 7. Street-front design guidelines

A number of improvements to the citywide design guidelines are proposed. These changes are based on ten years experience using the City's Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings; lessons learned through the commercial development case studies in the Neighborhood Business District Strategy Background Report; and through the introduction of new ideas and concept from neighborhood-specific design guidelines.

### Residential Development

Residential development occurring at street level in commercial zones (outside of Pedestrian designations) deserves special attention during the design review process both because of privacy issues and the effect that a poorly designed residential building could have on the pedestrian streetscape. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between

**Table 10: Development standards that could be modified under design review**

Standards that can be modified (current list)	Standards that can't be modified (proposed list)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Structure width and depth limits</li> <li>● Setback requirements</li> <li>● Modulation requirements</li> <li>● SCM zone facade requirements</li> <li>● Design, location on the lot and access to parking requirements</li> <li>● Open space or common recreation area requirements</li> <li>● Lot coverage limits</li> <li>● Rooftop coverage limits that apply within the South Lake Union Hub Urban Village</li> <li>● Screening and landscaping requirements</li> <li>● Standards for the location and design of nonresidential uses in mixed use buildings;</li> <li>● Within Urban Centers, in L3 zones only, the pitched roof of a structure</li> <li>● Building height departures within the Roosevelt Commercial Core</li> <li>● Building height within the Ballard Municipal Center master plan area</li> <li>● Reduction in required parking for ground level retail uses that abut established mid-block pedestrian connections through private property as identified in the "Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan Design Guidelines"</li> <li>● Downtown or Stadium Transition Overlay District street facade requirements</li> <li>● Downtown upper-level development standards</li> <li>● Downtown coverage and floor size limits;</li> <li>● Downtown maximum wall dimensions;</li> <li>● Downtown street level use requirements;</li> <li>● Combined coverage of all rooftop features in downtown zones subject to the limitations in Section 23.49.008 C2</li> <li>● Certain conditions to allowance of additional height in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones pursuant to subsection</li> <li>● Building height in Lowrise zones</li> <li>● Downtown view corridor and Downtown Green Street requirements to allow open railings</li> <li>● Minor communication utility height limits in downtown zones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use requirements, including but not limited to, requirements for permitted, prohibited or conditional uses</li> <li>● Residential density limits</li> <li>● Floor Area Ratios</li> <li>● Maximum size of use</li> <li>● Maximum structure height, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Building height departures within the Roosevelt Commercial Core may be granted</li> <li>◆ Building height departures may be granted within the Ballard Municipal Center master plan area</li> <li>◆ Building height departures may be granted in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones</li> <li>◆ Building height departures may be granted in Lowrise zones in order to protect existing trees</li> <li>◆ Building height departures may be granted Downtown for minor communication utilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Quantity of required parking except <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Required parking for certain uses in the Ballard Municipal Center master plan area</li> <li>◆ Required parking in Midrise and Commercial zones in order to protect existing trees</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Downtown view corridor and Downtown Green Street requirements, except to allow open railings on upper level roof decks or rooftop open space</li> <li>● Shoreline view corridors, provided that departures from shoreline view corridors may be granted as provided in section 23.60.162</li> </ul>



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the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents while also encouraging interaction among neighbors and a pleasant pedestrian environment. Residential buildings should enhance the open space character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops, and other elements that work to create a transition between the public and private realm.

## **Retail and Commercial Development**

Retail and commercial buildings are the backbone of neighborhood commercial areas. They should be attractive and detailed so that the pedestrian experience is enhanced. Specific considerations are addressed at two levels: Architectural and Site Planning

### **Architectural Details**

Architectural details serve to enhance the pedestrian streetscape environment. Incorporation of the following architectural elements should be considered for new commercial and mixed use development in (neighborhood) commercial zones:

- ♦ parapets,
- ♦ cornices,
- ♦ transoms,
- ♦ awnings,
- ♦ kick-plates or base course of different material,
- ♦ display windows that are large and transparent,
- ♦ entries that are recessed and/or easily identifiable
- ♦ lighting such as sconces that both illuminate building and sidewalk,
- ♦ signage perpendicular to building façade (blade signs) or occurring on building sign bands, in windows or on awnings or marquees are preferred
- ♦ multiple entries and the appearance of multiple storefronts, particularly for large retail spaces

- ♦ art,
- ♦ and plantings.

## **Site Planning and Building Organization**

Encourage distinct and comfortable ground-level pedestrian streetscape environments at the larger building or block scale.

### **Public Space**

Street-level public spaces can be created from building setbacks and/or indentations in the building façade. When surrounded by uses that generate pedestrian traffic, these small public spaces can enliven the pedestrian experience while bolstering businesses.

### **Parking**

Parking is an important issue in commercial areas. The orientation and design of parking lots and garages has large impacts on the pedestrian environment. Encourage designs that move parking away from principal pedestrian street fronts and screen parking from passers-by while providing signage to help maintain visual access to parking. Safe and attractive pedestrian access through surface parking lots is encouraged through the proposed design guidelines.

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## Requirements for Residential Amenities

### Background

The current private open space requirement (SMC 23.47.024) was adopted in 1988. Private, on-site open space equal to 20% of a structure's gross floor area in residential use is required to be provided. This requirement is substantially more open space than is required for similar development in multi-family or downtown zones. This space is intended for residents, are generally provided as decks and balconies, and should not be confused with public parks or other public spaces often referred to as "open space".

The original intent behind open space requirements is generally to ensure a quality of life for residents by providing some outdoor space for residents in multi-family developments. However, outdoor space is only a subset of the amenities that can serve the needs of residents. Interior spaces such as exercise rooms and community entertainment rooms are also desired by residents, particularly during winter and rainy months.

Development in commercial zones is generally property-line-to-property-line, occupying the entire lot at street level. In some cases, the current open space requirement can exceed the lot area of a given development project. Private decks or balconies and shared rooftop decks are the most common amenities provided under the current requirement. However, when units are small, balconies are frequently too small to qualify (balconies must be a minimum of 60 square feet to count as required open space). A rooftop deck is often all that is provided to meet open space requirements. This can both constrain development, as rooftop area is often insufficient, and create unused spaces when the rooftop is undesirable as a location for open space.

Seattle has experience with allowing interior spaces to meet residential amenity needs. In the downtown

and Cascade neighborhoods, enclosed spaces are allowed to count toward a "common recreation area" requirement. In these cases, community rooms and exercise facilities are often provided. These spaces provide common spaces for residents to interact and weather protection to allow their use year-round. In neighborhoods outside of downtown, these types of spaces are often provided even though they may not count towards fulfilling open space requirements.

### Resident Survey

DPD conducted an informal survey to learn what amenities residents of multi-family and mixed-use residential buildings prefer and how those amenities are used. DPD mailed approximately 600 copies of the survey, with pre-paid return postage, to residents of apartment and condominium buildings throughout the city. The Department also made the survey available to anyone on the DPD website. In total, there were 112 responses to the mailed survey and 58 responses to the online survey.

The results of the survey show that there is an interest in having a wider variety of amenities available. For example, when asked how often private outdoor or shared outdoor space is used, as an indication of preference as well as frequency of use, 74 percent reported using private space once a day or once a week and 40 percent using shared space at the same frequency. Response to the same question comparing indoor shared space to outdoor shared space, was that 60 percent used indoor shared space and 40 percent used outdoor shared space once a day or once a week.

Most results are similarly split. The survey provided no clear preference. All types of amenities (indoor vs. outdoor, shared vs. private) received sizable levels of support.

### Developer Interviews

Developers were asked "What residential amenities appeal most to residents?" The overriding response

was that amenity preferences are variable. Residents in higher density areas prefer indoor community amenities rather than outdoor space. Another factor is the type of resident. For example, senior citizens will prefer different amenities than young professionals.

Socioeconomic status also was cited as a factor in amenity preference. Balconies and roof decks are seen as not as important to low income or subsidized housing residents. The most important factor these tenants look for in choosing housing is low rent. The respondents involved in developing housing for these tenants noted that they would rather use their resources to provide more living space than more open space. In these buildings the amenity that was mentioned as preferred were community rooms where people meet, interact, and build a sense of community.

A related theme revolved around the marketability of amenities and the actual use of amenities by tenants. Shared amenities including community rooms, gyms, or roof decks were reported as attractive to potential renters, but are not necessarily used by the tenants at a high rate. This is similar to the survey responses mentioned above.

## Other Cities.

Compared to other cities, Seattle's proposed requirements for residential amenity space in mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods are in the middle to high range:

**Table II:  
Other Cities' Residential Amenity Space Requirements**

City	Open Space Requirement (In zones similar to Seattle's commercial zones)
Austin	100 square feet per unit.
Bellevue	50 square feet per unit plus 800 square foot children's play area
Chicago	36 square feet per unit
Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Portland, OR and Tacoma	None.
San Francisco	36 to 80 square feet per unit.
San Jose, CA	60 square feet per unit.
Seattle (current requirement)	20% of building area in residential use (100 square feet for a 500 square foot studio unit to 200 square feet for a 1,000 square foot two-bedroom unit)
Seattle (proposed requirement)	10% of building area in residential use (50 square feet for a 500 square foot studio unit to 100 square feet for a 1,000 square foot two-bedroom unit) up to 50% of lot area.
Vancouver, B.C.	None required in by-laws, but design guidelines provide for balconies and communal spaces.

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## Recommendations

Residential amenity requirements for all residential development in commercial zones are proposed to be simplified and aligned with requirements for other zones (mixed use buildings and residential structures).

It is recommended that the following residential amenity requirements apply to residential uses in commercial zones citywide:

- ♦ Amenity areas would be required in an amount equal to ten (10) percent of the total gross floor area in residential use
- ♦ Amenity areas would not be required to exceed fifty percent of the lot area.
- ♦ Half of the amenity area would need to be outside.
- ♦ Eligible residential amenity areas would be listed and include: decks, balconies, terraces, solaria, greenhouses, roof gardens, community rooms, exercise rooms, plazas, courtyards and other similar amenities.
- ♦ Half of the amenity area requirement could be met by paying a fee that would be used to provide publicly accessible open space in the area.

The proposal acknowledges that the original intent of the open space requirement was more about tenant amenities than the term “open space” implies. The new proposal better reflects urban neighborhoods.

The proposed residential amenity requirement:

- ♦ will meet the needs of residents, while recognizing how such requirements can impact the cost of housing;
- ♦ is equal to or more than what is required in other cities around the state and North America; and
- ♦ better fits the type of development and the interests of the current and future residents of Seattle’s mixed use neighborhoods.

- ♦ Allows more flexibility for types of amenities provided (and more usable amenities, considering Seattle weather), including: workout rooms and community rooms as well as decks and balconies.





### Summary of Parking Recommendations

1. Lower parking requirements throughout commercial areas based on new demand data, transit accessibility, and City transit and walking goals
2. To better encourage small businesses, waive parking for the first 1,500 square feet of a business, instead of the first 2,500 square feet per use
3. To better encourage the reuse of existing buildings and be more flexible for businesses, waive parking requirements up to 20 spaces for businesses that are proposed to move into an existing building.
4. In Urban Centers and high-capacity transit station areas, allow the market rather than the code to determine appropriate parking supply, by removing minimum parking requirements.
5. Allow on-site parking to be shared with other uses as long as it is signed short-term (4 hours or less).
6. Establish a one-acre surface parking maximum to reduce new impervious surfaces.
7. Revise requirements for bicycle parking to be calculated separately from auto parking.

### Automobile Parking

#### Background

As a primary influence in shaping the business community over the past 60 years, automobile parking is regarded as vital to economic success. Historically, Seattle and the Puget Sound region have used parking regulations to provide parking to accommodate customers and prevent spillover into adjacent neighborhoods. Seattle's rules have been organized in formulas that are intended to anticipate the amount of future parking needed. The formulas are based on nation-wide studies of parking demand from the 1980s, and are generally based on suburban development. The requirements assume that these formulas can predict the future parking demand for over 177 different kinds of land uses.

Since the current parking requirements were first adopted, a number of new goals for parking in commercial areas have been introduced:

- ◆ Seattle's parking regulations can help build the different kind of neighborhood business districts that Seattle residents, businesses, and property owners want to experience.
- ◆ Regulations should support Seattle's transportation investments and Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.
- ◆ Regulations should not create an over-supply of off-street parking.

Additionally, a major goal behind the Neighborhood Business District Strategy is to make the Land Use Code simpler—a universal goal that extends beyond the commercial code.

The Comprehensive Plan goals and policies prioritize short-term on- and off-street parking for business customers in commercial districts and longer-term on- and off-street parking for residents in residential districts. Providing unrestricted all-day commuter parking is not a Seattle priority, as it would undermine neighborhood livability, and goals

for transportation alternatives and reducing traffic congestion. Appropriate off-street parking requirements, combined with on-street curb space management, shared parking, information and marketing of transportation alternatives, and transportation demand management, among other tools, help to make a parking system work.

People often assign the responsibility for lack of parking availability to new development. Neighborhood parking congestion, instead, is a reflection of three factors that are not a result of new development:

1. the neighborhood’s attractiveness as an area to live, work and play;
2. existing buildings that historically didn’t provide parking; and
3. the general preference for free or low-priced on-street parking spaces over paying for parking or using garages.

New buildings can rarely compensate for these factors. New development cannot and should not be expected to make up for existing deficits. Additionally, recent studies of neighborhood parking supply and demand showed that the Land Use Code often requires that more parking be provided than is used in the new development (see Table 12.) If parking were not so expensive to build, this might not be a problem, but requiring unused parking spaces at up to \$30,000 a space can quickly and significantly increase the cost of housing and commercial space.

Instead, flexibility and responsiveness to local conditions can help to achieve Seattle’s goals. Flexibility and the marketplace are likely to help ensure that an appropriate amount of parking is built. In many cases, developers are not able to finance projects or find tenants unless they can show that they can satisfy their tenants’ parking demand. Yet code requirements are higher than demand.

The Land Use Code establishes the minimum parking requirements for most development in Seattle’s commercial zones. Seattle’s current

**Table 12: Parking Requirements Compared to Parking Demand Data**

Where the current minimum parking requirement is:	Average demand was found to be:
1 space per 350 square feet [multipurpose convenience store, general retail sales/ service, medical services, animal health services, auto parts/accessory sales, etc.]	1 space per 442 square feet
1 space per 200 square feet [eating and drinking establishments]	1 space per 177 square feet

Source:  
 Seattle Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study, City of Seattle, SPO, 2000;  
 Urban Village Off-Street Parking Study, City of Seattle, SDOT, 2004

minimum parking requirements were established twenty years ago based on national Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) guidelines. These guidelines were based on statistical models using suburban examples. Currently, over 175 different minimum parking requirements are listed for land uses in Seattle. Most non-residential uses require a minimum of 1 parking space for every 350 sq. ft. of floor area. Other examples of minimum requirements are 1 space per 1,000 sq. ft. of administrative office use, 1 space per 2,000 sq. ft. for heavy commercial, vehicle, and manufacturing land uses, and 1 space per 200 sq. ft. of floor area for restaurants or drinking establishments.

Other parking regulations currently found in the Land Use Code include:

- ♦ Shared parking and cooperative parking (SMC 23.54.020): Seattle allows new non-residential development to provide parking off-site within 800 feet in many circumstances. Cooperative parking means that a variety of businesses within a building can share off-street parking.

- ♦ Transit reductions (SMC 23.54.020): Within many commercial zones, except pedestrian-designated zones, a new non-residential use can reduce the total amount of required parking by up to 20% when located within 800 feet of frequent bus routes.
- ♦ Small businesses waiver (SMC 23.54.015 E): In all zones, the first 2,500 square feet of gross floor area of most non-residential uses in a structure can be waived. The waiver does not apply to restaurants with drive-through lanes, movie theaters, administrative offices or institutional uses, including Major Institution uses. This waiver applies to the use rather than the business establishment. Buildings with more than one business in the same use category will split the parking waiver between the businesses (a hair salon and a bookstore fall into the same use category.)
- ♦ Bicycle parking requirements (SMC 23.54.015 I): Many residential and non-residential developments are required to provide bicycle parking as a percentage of required automobile parking, when the auto parking required exceeds 20 spaces.

Parking regulations currently found in Chapter 23.47 include:

- ♦ Pedestrian-designated zones (SMC 23.47.044): As has been discussed, a substantial amount of parking can be waived for pedestrian-oriented businesses to encourage a pedestrian-oriented retail environment and to facilitate new business start-up

There are numerous other parking regulations in the Land Use Code. The proposed parking revisions only apply to commercial uses and commercial zones.

## ***1. Examining local conditions***

The current state of neighborhood parking conditions in Seattle — the supply and demand for off-street parking and the relationship between what is built and what is used and the Land Use Code requirements — forms the basis of the recommended changes to the parking regulations. Four data sources were used to perform this analysis: the Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study (CNPS, City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office, 2000), review of parking in Belltown residential buildings where parking is not currently required, an urban village off-street parking study (City of Seattle, SDOT, 2004), and U.S. Census data regarding car ownership. These parking data sources help to match real-life parking and traffic experiences to off-street parking regulations.

The CNPS was used as a starting point to understanding actual parking demand in Seattle's neighborhood business districts. In 2000, this study collected on and off-street parking data in over 35 areas of Seattle neighborhoods outside of the downtown retail core. The results of the parking data highlighted the difficulty of establishing a single minimum requirement across the entire city that could prevent parking spillover on the one hand and discourage under used parking on the other. A single minimum requirement is not flexible enough to address the varied parking demands for different transportation and land use patterns across Seattle.

Table 12 compares the current parking requirements with average parking demand found across Seattle for land uses that require 1 space per 350 square feet (mostly general retail uses) and 1 space per 200 square feet (restaurant uses). For the general retail land uses, the average peak demand was 80% less than the required minimum parking. For restaurants, the average peak demand was 13% higher than the required minimum parking. More information is available in the NBDS Background Report.

A second data source is found in downtown residential buildings and retail-oriented businesses in

pedestrian areas where Seattle has no minimum parking requirements. In these areas, developers still provide parking. The amount of parking provided is more closely tailored to the anticipated uses of a building. Higher end Downtown condos with multiple bedrooms typically come with two parking spaces, while small apartment buildings aimed at lower-income singles may provide one parking space for every four units. Table 13 presents the amount of parking provided in five recent Downtown residential buildings. This data shows that the downtown housing market supplies the amount of parking tenants demand or the developer believes is needed. Only one building has been identified that did not provide any parking, an apartment building developed by a not-for-profit agency serving very

**Table 13:**  
**Parking in New Downtown Residential Buildings**

Building Address	Dwelling Units	Parking Spaces	Spaces per Unit
2922 Western	137	199	1.5
2415 Western	115	181	1.6
2000 1st Ave	70	98+105	2.9
2319 1st Ave	52	57	1.1
211 Lenora	107	109	1.0

low-income residents in a location close to multiple bus lines, grocery stores and other services.

Third, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) collected additional off-street parking data in eight Seattle neighborhood business districts (Greenwood; Eastlake; Lake City; Columbia City; Madison-Miller; Admiral; Alaska Junction; and Ballard) in the fall of 2004. Table 14 compares current parking requirements to the average parking demand at these businesses, office and residential developments.

Two key points emerge from the demand data, consistent with the findings of the 2000 Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study:

- ◆ Seattle is currently requiring more parking spaces than are used for most retail and residential buildings.
- ◆ Buildings generally provide more parking spaces than are required. Businesses that have the highest parking demand (fast food restaurants and banks) provide the most parking relative to their building size. Conversely, grocery stores and other multi-purpose convenience stores on average have about twice the amount of parking supplied than needed. The result is large surface parking lots that sit empty much of the year.

The parking data illustrates another very important point, and address a concern expressed by neighborhood residents. A lower minimum parking requirement does not mean that absolutely no on-site parking will be provided. The data shows that most development will provide parking to meet their demand. In fact, the amount of parking provided most often exceeds the average and peak demand.

In addition to the parking demand analysis, the 2000 Census data on “vehicles available per household” offers another reliable way to measure residential parking demand. Citywide, on average, households have 1.34 vehicles. However, breaking that number down to look at the buildings that are most likely to be built in neighborhood business districts, it becomes clear that Seattle’s requirements of 1.1 to 1.5 generally provides more spaces than households in these areas typically need (see Table 15). In buildings with 5 or more units, the average number of cars per household is 0.8, with a decreasing number of cars per household as the number of units goes up. While the figures vary slightly from neighborhood to neighborhood, in no area does the average number of cars available per household in multifamily structures exceed 1 space.

These figures indicate that the way the City currently regulates parking with more parking spaces required per unit the more units are present in a building is opposite to the way that people actually live. Residents of larger buildings are more likely to have fewer cars than other residents of Seattle.

**Table 14:  
Average Off-Street Parking Demand for Retail, Restaurant and Multifamily Buildings**

Land Use Category	# of Sites	Average Building Size (ft <sup>2</sup> or units)	Average # of Parking Spaces	Parking Spaces per 1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> or units	Weekday Parking Demand per 1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> or units	Weekend Parking Demand per 1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> or units	Parking Spaces Currently Required	Requirement > Demand?
General Sales and Services	71	9,380	32	3.4	1.92	1.81	2.9	Yes
Bank	4	7,944	39	4.9	3.73	2.90	2.9	No
Big-Box Retail	5	8,029	26	3.2	2.30	2.40	2.9	Yes
Convenience Store	7	2,953	14	4.7	2.46	2.30	2.9	Yes
General Retail	37	6,510	17	2.6	1.76	1.52	2.9	Yes
Medical Offices	5	3,966	19	4.8	2.46	2.30	2.9	Yes
Multipurpose Stores	13	24,051	90	3.7	1.75	1.78	2.9	Yes
Restaurants	11	4,605	17	3.6	2.22	2.04	5.0	Yes
Fast Food Restaurants	4	2,849	28	9.8	5.81	6.47	5.0	No
General Restaurants	7	5,609	10	1.8	1.18	0.76	5.0	Yes
Multifamily Residential	22	10	10	1.0	0.78	0.91	1.1	Yes
Buildings with 2-10 units	16	7	7	1.0	0.85	0.93	1.1	Yes
Buildings with 11-30 units	6	18	19	1.1	0.60	0.84	1.2	Yes

Source: Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study, City of Seattle, SDOT, 2000



**Table 15:**  
**Cars Available per Seattle Household Compared to Building Size**

Number of Units in Structure	Households	Cars Available	Cars per Household	Current Requirement
Single-Family Houses	138,701	243,754	1.8	1
Duplex/Triplex/Fourplex	22,448	27,480	1.2	1.1
5 to 19 units	42,454	40,302	0.9	1.1 to 1.15
20 to 49 units	33,686	28,050	0.8	1.15 to 1.2
50 or more units	31,661	18,335	0.6	1.2 to 1.25

Source: 2000 US Census, 5-percent sample PUMS data, City of Seattle, SDOT Analysis, 2004

## **2. Transportation Alternatives in Seattle's Urban Centers and Station Areas**

Seattle's six urban centers are: Downtown Seattle, 1<sup>st</sup> Hill/Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, Uptown (Lower Queen Anne), University and Northgate. These areas are all mixed-use neighborhoods with significant concentrations of both housing and jobs and excellent transit service. With construction of light rail underway, "station areas" have been mapped around the future light rail stations. These station areas are the areas where residents are most likely to walk or bike to use the light rail system. Planning for similar station areas around the proposed monorail stations is underway. It is Seattle's goal to encourage the continued development and redevelopment of urban centers and station areas into denser, mixed-use communities, with strong pedestrian, bike and transit facilities.

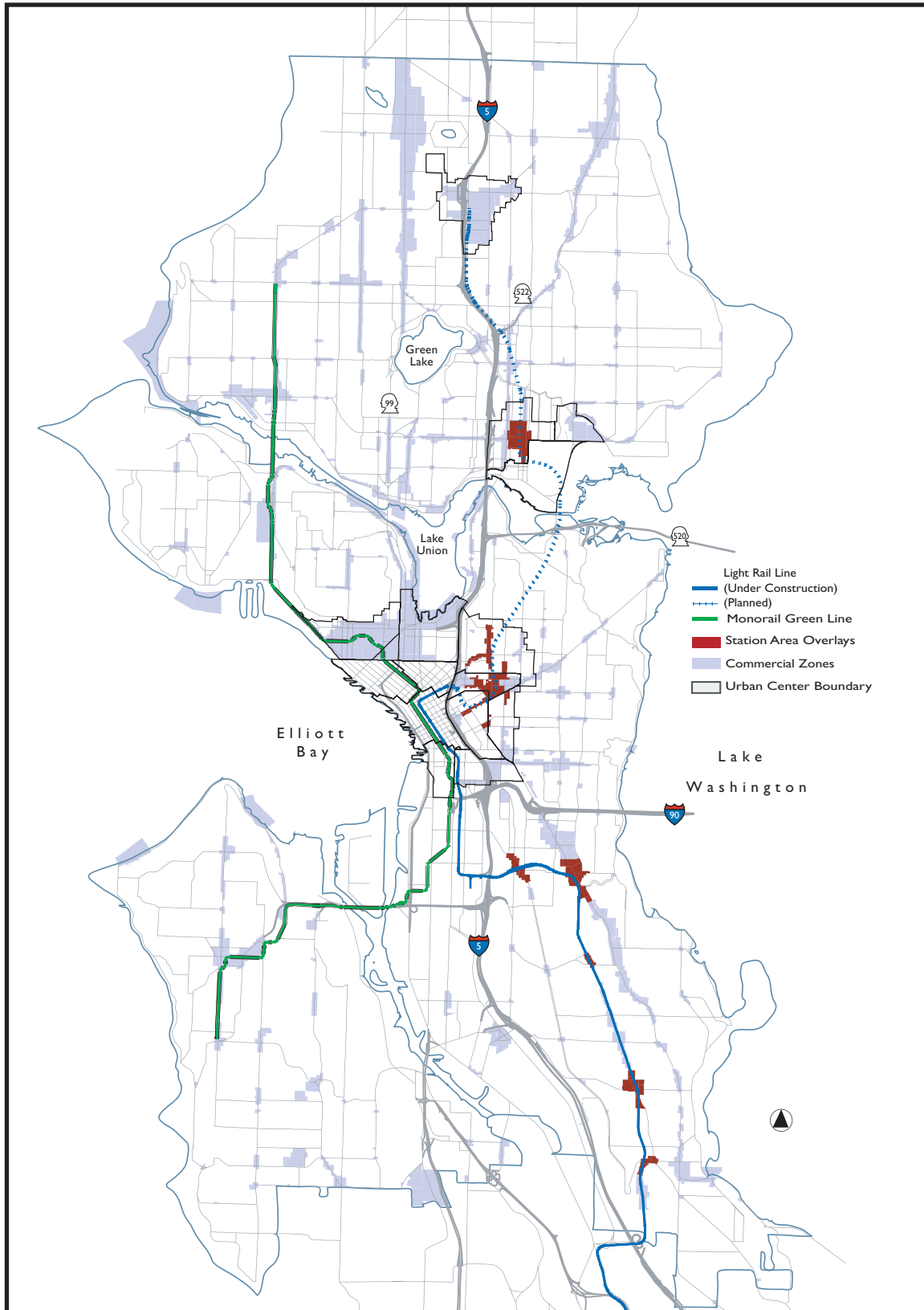
Seattle's urban centers attract residents who enjoy excellent transit service and walking access to neighborhood shopping. They have high numbers of residents who do not use cars to get to work (see Table 16). These residents are also likely to not use their cars to access local businesses. In each of the centers, the ratio of cars per household (including single-family households) is lower than the citywide average.

In addition, the on-street parking in these areas is already or will be controlled using parking pay stations, parking meters and/or residential parking zones (RPZs), which limit non-resident long-term parking. The U-District, Broadway, Pike/Pine, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and First Hill neighborhoods are, or will soon be, entirely regulated with paid on-street parking, RPZs, and loading zones. Beginning in 2005, SDOT will be working with the South Lake Union community to develop appropriate on-street parking controls in that neighborhood and expects that pay stations may be installed in 2006. SDOT will be working with station area communities to establish RPZs around rail stations to discourage so-called hide-and-ride parking. RPZs will be established before the stations open to help prevent problems.

## **3. Impacts of parking on neighborhoods, health and the environment**

As noted, the City's parking demand analyses shows that development in Seattle's neighborhood business districts supplies more parking than is needed on average or at peak times. These findings illustrate observations made by national parking experts about the negative traffic, environmental and land use effects of too much free off-street parking. In addition, the City's efforts to protect water quality are strongly related given water runoff problems

## Urban Centers and Station Areas



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caused by impervious surface parking lots. While most people prefer free parking in front of their houses, shops and workplaces, such ease of access to parking can impact the natural environment, increase traffic, and decrease neighborhood quality of life.

National experts such as Dr. Donald Shoup with UCLA have written extensively that free parking helps to stimulate parking demand. As an example, in a study of California office development, Shoup found that an average of 36 percent more commuters drove to work alone when parking was free at work as compared to when a fee was charged for the parking.<sup>1</sup> He argues that an inappropriate amount of parking is being required by not letting the private market decide how much parking is needed. Instead, the minimum parking requirement means that the cost of providing the parking is hidden and is unlikely to be considered when weighing different transportation choices. When people do not pay out of pocket parking costs, as is the case in most Seattle business districts, this tends to stimulate automobile use.

The free price of most parking raises questions related to whether encouraging the development of an unlimited amount of “free” parking at the neighborhood grocery store is helping to stimulate driving. Such *induced driving* has implications for traffic congestion, air pollution, and other environmental issues. In that same southern California study, Shoup found that parking charges or alternative transportation subsidies led to the following reductions (among others):

- ♦ 43 vehicle trips per employee per year
- ♦ 652 vehicle miles traveled per employee per year
- ♦ 514 pounds of carbon dioxide
- ♦ 26 gallons of gas per employee per year
- ♦ The saved vehicle emissions is equivalent to about one-and-a-half month’s worth of the vehicle emissions from driving to work daily.

1. Shoup, Donald. 1997. “Evaluating the Effects of California Parking Cash-Out Law: Eight Case Studies.” Berkeley, CA: University of California Transportation Center.

The environmental implications described above are exactly what the Seattle Comprehensive Plan is trying to reduce with policies that discourage automobile use and encourage transit, bicycling and walking. The proposed NBDS parking changes support other City department and other government agency efforts. The Puget Sound region is making significant investments in rail transit with Sound Transit Light Rail and the Seattle Monorail Project Green Line. In addition, SDOT is developing a Seattle Transit Plan to emphasize and support transit (rail and bus) to connect Seattle’s urban centers and villages. All of these efforts will create additional ways to provide access to neighborhood business districts.

Seattle Public Utilities and SDOT are currently working together on natural drainage systems that reduce impervious surfaces, provide green space in residential areas, and help Seattle meet new state Department of Ecology stormwater management regulations. Limiting surface parking can help to support that work.

Alternatively, if Seattle continues to require excess parking, the costs of driving compared to transit will continue to be subsidized, counter to adopted goals and transportation investments. Parking is an inefficient use of valuable land. It takes up space that could otherwise be used by affordable housing, job sites and green space.

#### **4. A much too-complicated Land Use Code**

The code’s complexity has made it difficult to understand and use the City’s parking regulations. It also increases regulatory barriers to economic development and housing affordability with the accumulation of detailed and contradictory requirements for citizens, developers and City staff to wade through. The current minimum parking requirements list the equivalent of 177 different parking rules for 133 different land uses, in part because many uses that

have the same amount of parking required are listed separately. For example:

- ♦ Airport, land-based (waiting area) and Airport, water-based (waiting area) each with a requirement for 1 space for each 100 square feet
- ♦ Manufacturing, general; Manufacturing, heavy; and Manufacturing, light each with a requirement for 1 space for each 1,500 square feet

In addition, many uses are split into multiple sub-categories, each with its own parking requirement. For example, there are eighteen different regulations for multifamily uses.

## Recommendations

As part of the Neighborhood Business District Strategy, the following changes to parking requirements are recommended. To further the City's goals, the proposed changes to parking requirements:

- ♦ Provide flexibility to respond to local conditions: In most cases, the market is a better gauge for needed parking than City regulations.
- ♦ Support the over 4 billion dollar investment in rail transit and other transportation investments in Seattle's neighborhoods.
- ♦ Build the urban neighborhoods we want, not the surface parking lots that we don't need: The average structured parking space costs between

\$20,000 and \$30,000. When developers do not have to oversupply parking, housing and small commercial spaces may be built more affordably. Better urban design results from fewer curbs-cuts, fewer garage entrances, fewer and smaller surface parking lots and fewer breaks in continuous commercial street fronts.

- ♦ Encourage smaller development: Excessive parking requirements make small lot in-fill development difficult. With lower minimum requirements, smaller lots can proceed with re-development plans without a burdensome parking requirement to further complicate plans and raise costs.
- ♦ Simplify the Land Use Code: The parking chart for commercial uses is simpler. Instead of 177 different parking requirements regulating 133 land uses, 72 parking requirements are proposed. Other calculations have been further simplified to improve administration and enforcement of the Code and to assist the public's understanding of Code requirements.

### ***1. Let the market determine appropriate parking in urban centers and transit station areas***

Minimum parking requirements are proposed to be repealed in commercial zones in urban centers and rail transit station areas. This change would apply

**Table 16:  
Transportation Choices of Urban Center Residents**

Urban Center	Workers	Drove alone to Work	% who Drove Alone	Average Number of Cars per Household
Ist Hill/Capitol Hill	22,009	6,778	31%	0.73
Downtown	8,929	2,480	28%	0.51
Northgate	2,475	1,229	50%	0.98
South Lake Union	697	275	39%	0.70
University Community	10,468	3,104	30%	0.91
Uptown	3,285	1,350	41%	0.90
All Urban Centers	47,863	15,216	32%	0.62
City Total	316,493	191,326	60%	1.35

Source: 2000 US Census, City of Seattle, DPD Analysis, 2004

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to NC, C and Seattle Cascade Mixed (SCM) zones in the First Hill/Capitol Hill, Downtown, Uptown/Seattle Center, University Community, and South Lake Union urban centers. It would also apply to the Station Area Overlay District, which includes the areas around the Beacon Hill, McClellan Avenue South, Edmunds Avenue South, Othello Avenue South, and South Henderson Street light rail stations. The proposal would also apply to monorail station areas if and when the Station Area Overlay District is applied around monorail stations. These changes are recommended to support and recognize the transit service available in these areas. The changes would not apply to the Northgate Urban Center for uses for which Northgate's overlay has its own parking regulations. The changes would also not apply to single-family, multifamily, industrial, or downtown zones, or to major institutions.

In any case, new development in areas like Capitol Hill, the U-District, and the McClellan light rail station area, would likely respond to the current market and provide an appropriate amount of parking for a particular land use. Grocery stores, restaurants, and market-rate housing uses are expected to continue to provide on-site parking because of market demand. Because these areas are, or are planned to be, denser mixed-use communities, many small businesses will draw most of their customers either from the neighborhood, or from customers visiting multiple businesses in one trip. Consequently, existing requirements, even the lower requirements proposed for other neighborhood business districts, may require much more parking than these businesses need to thrive. The result of excessive parking requirements is less development, more expensive development and wasted space and resources.

## **2. Lower the minimum parking requirements**

New minimum parking requirements are proposed to be at or below levels of estimated average parking demand, based on Seattle neighborhood parking

demand data collected in the fall of 2004 and also in the City's 2000 Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study. Some examples of changes in the overall minimum parking requirements proposed are in Table 17. In order to maintain consistency, simplicity, and to reflect a basic level of parking demand for each use, these lower parking requirements would apply to these uses in all zones, except for the lower multifamily parking requirements which will only apply in commercial zones.

DPD documented ten other North American cities' off-street parking regulations and compared them to the existing and proposed minimum parking requirements. The comparison to other cities provides opportunities to assess the appropriateness of Seattle's proposed requirements.

Generally, it was found that the NBDS proposed minimum parking requirements are either on par with the ten North American cities or on the low end. For general retail sales and services such as florists and hair salons, the proposed 1 space per 500 square feet is similar to Portland, San Francisco and Cleveland. For restaurants and fast-food places, the proposed 1 space per 250 square feet is similar to Portland as well.

Other cities use their parking regulations to support transit and pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods. The City of San Francisco is proposing changes to their downtown and selected neighborhood parking regulations to support transit use, promote affordable housing, and discourage automobile use. While still in the early stages of their planning work, staff are considering eliminating minimum parking requirements and using the previous minimum requirements as maximum limits.

Several cities set maximum parking limits in denser urban areas, similar to the City's current maximum in downtown Seattle. The City of San Francisco is considering instituting maximums. The City of Olympia has a maximum impervious surface coverage that acts to limit surface parking.



**Table 17:  
Proposed Parking Requirements**

Use	Current Minimum Requirement	Proposed Minimum Requirement	Comparison
General sales and services uses (florists, dry cleaners, grocery stores, hardware stores, banks, real estate offices) Medical services (medical clinics, dentists' offices)	1 space per 350 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 space per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 less space for every 1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> of new development
Multifamily Buildings	1.1 to 1.5 spaces per unit	1 space per unit	Up to 1/2 of a space less per unit
Restaurants and Bars	1 space per 200 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 space per 250 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 less space for every 1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> of development
Research and Development Labs	1 space per 1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> to 1 space per 1,500 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 space per 1,500 ft <sup>2</sup>	0.5 spaces less for every 1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> of new development

Also, many cities with rail transit systems have different parking requirements for station areas. In Portland, with several light rail lines, there are no minimum commercial or residential parking requirements for sites well served by transit. This applies to developments located less than 500 feet from a transit street with 20-minute peak hour service.

For more detailed information see Appendix V.

### **3. Support pedestrian-oriented development in neighborhood retail cores by waiving parking for certain ground-floor retail development.**

In addition to changes to minimum parking requirements, it is proposed that the current parking waiver that exempts the first 2,500 square feet of a *use* from providing parking be replaced with a waiver applying to the first 1,500 square feet of non-residential space per *business establishment* outside of pedestrian designated zones. The amendment changes the effect of the waiver by applying it to

each proposed business instead of each a proposed use type. This proposal is intended to encourage the creation of commercial spaces suited to smaller businesses. Not providing the waiver would result in higher construction costs for street-level commercial uses compared to street-level residential uses, with street-level commercial spaces being required to spend up to \$100,000 more in construction costs for the same amount of space in structured parking.

The Pedestrian designation that is proposed to identify the retail or commercial core of a neighborhood will require certain ground level, street front commercial uses similar to the current requirement in the Pedestrian 1 (P1) and Pedestrian 2 (P2) designated zones. The current waiver of required parking applicable in the P2 designated zone would be consistently applied to all Pedestrian designated zones for the ground-level uses in Table 18.

Currently the P1 parking waiver reduces the minimum parking requirement by 15,000 square feet for most ground-floor retail establishments in NC2 and 25,000 square feet in NC3 zones (compared to

**TABLE 18:  
Proposed Parking Waivers for Pedestrian-Designated Areas**

Use Type	NCI	NC2 & NC 3
General sales and service uses	4,000 ft <sup>2</sup> (5 spaces more than basic waiver)	5,000 ft <sup>2</sup> (7 spaces more than basic waiver)
Entertainment uses	first 150 seats (19 spaces)	first 150 seats (19 spaces)
Eating and drinking establishments	2,500 ft <sup>2</sup> (4 spaces more than basic waiver)	2,500 ft <sup>2</sup> (4 spaces more than basic waiver)

the P2 waivers listed in the above table). Review of buildings built in the P1 zone could find no projects that used this higher waiver. For many neighborhoods, introducing a business of 15,000 square feet or 25,000 square feet without parking would either impact the neighborhood's total parking supply, or simply leave the new business without customers. Areas most likely to be able to absorb this amount of parking demand are urban centers and station areas where many alternatives to driving exist. A 5,000 square foot waiver is appropriate. The practical effect is the elimination of the minimum parking requirement in these zones to enhance the pedestrian environment.

#### **4. Support the use and reuse of existing buildings by waiving parking requirements for uses that occupy existing commercial spaces.**

In order to support the revitalization of Seattle's neighborhood business districts and the efficient reuse of existing spaces, it is proposed that no additional parking be required when a change of use in existing commercial spaces is proposed, unless the change would result in more than 20 parking spaces being required.

When a change in the use of a property or commercial space is requested, a review is required to determine if the new use would be subject to different development standards from the existing use. This review often identifies parking as an issue

and can require that the new use provide one or more additional parking spaces, unless exceptions noted in Director's Rule 51-88 are met. Common examples are changes from retail to a restaurant, or an office to retail or medical services use. This requirement is often burdensome to new local businesses who must conserve start-up costs and time in order to be successful. Finding off-street parking that is available and can be committed to the use of an existing building can be very difficult. When the spaces aren't available, the business incurs unnecessary costs and delay that may threaten their business enterprise.

A study comparing changes of use between 1994 and 2004 and the amount of parking that they would have been required to provide under the proposed parking changes indicates that the largest impact of this change could have been a deficit of up to 17 parking spaces in a district (see Table 19). The average impact will be between one and three spaces. Unless a neighborhood has a large amount of unused on-street parking, businesses that would require 17 additional parking spaces would likely find a way to provide some of that parking to meet their business need.

#### **5. Promote short-term parking**

Because the City's parking policies support short-term parking in business districts, but the current code does not effectively encourage it, two changes to more effectively and efficiently use existing

neighborhood parking supply are proposed. These changes also help to simplify the Land Use Code.

1. Change the Land Use Code definition of short-term parking from six hours to four hours. The four-hour time limit will better support neighborhood business district shopping needs, and reduce commuter use of short-term parking. This change would apply citywide to any area where short-term parking is required.
2. Allow accessory parking to be used by the general public as principal use short-term parking, at a property-owner's discretion. The Land Use Code currently defines off-street parking as either principal or accessory use parking. Accessory parking is either reserved or required for a particular use. Principal use parking is publicly available parking, usually for a fee. This distinction does not allow neighbor-

hood business groups or individual property owners the opportunity to lease available off-street parking when it is not needed by the particular accessory land use. An example would be neighborhood banks or office buildings that offer their parking as paid parking during non-work hours (evenings and Sundays). There is the potential that through this change, some residents and businesses will no longer have exclusive right to use the parking attached to their building. However, the total amount of parking available for use in a community should expand as the existing parking supply is used more efficiently.

**Table 19:  
Potential Parking Impact of Exempting Changes of Use from Parking Requirements  
(Commercial Zone Projects 1994-2004 using Proposed Parking Requirements)**

Change of Use From Lower to Higher Parking Requirement (Examples)	Parking Req't. for Existing Use	Parking Req't. for New Use	# of Projects 1994-2004	Largest Space Converted (SF)	Most Add'l Parking Spaces Required per Project	Total Add'l Parking Required for all Projects	Average Number of Spaces Required
Warehouse to Office	1 space/ 2000 sq. ft.	1 space/ 1000 sq. ft.	23	28,570	14	37	1.6
Gas Station to Retail	1 space/ 2000 sq. ft.	1 space/ 500 sq. ft.	46	13,269	11	75	1.6
General Office to Doctor's Office	1 space/ 1000 sq. ft.	1 space/ 500 sq. ft.	54	20,432	7	63	1.2
Auto Sales to Restaurant	1 space/ 2000 sq. ft.	1 space/ 250 sq. ft.	10	6,138	5	12	1.2
Office to Restaurant	1 space/ 1000 sq. ft.	1 space/ 250 sq. ft.	28	7,097	17	77	2.8
Retail to Restaurant	1 space/ 500 sq. ft.	1 space/ 250 sq. ft.	166	14,440	16	372	2.2
All changes of use			327	28,570	17	636	1.9

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## **6. Establish a maximum limit of surface parking to discourage the expanse of impermeable asphalt in neighborhood business districts.**

A maximum surface parking limit of 145 spaces is proposed to reduce the expanse of impermeable surface parking lots surrounding larger retail establishments and/or large office developments. The limit would apply to any new surface parking built either on-site or off-site. Sharing of off-site existing surface parking lots would remain possible. There would be no limit to the total amount of parking provided, as long as any amount of parking built above the maximum surface limit is built within or underneath a structure.

The 145-space limit is intended to address environmental concerns related to water pollution and stormwater runoff. A limit of 145 spaces is roughly equivalent to one acre of surface parking (assuming an average of 300 square feet for a parking space and proportionate aisles, entrance and egress). The Washington State Department of Ecology regulations for surface water management endorse an impervious surface limit of one acre, in order to protect against increased stormwater flows, water pollution impacts and to encourage pervious surfaces that allow for water infiltration rather than runoff into water bodies.

## **7. Simplify the Parking Regulations**

In addition to the economic, transportation and land use goals for the Neighborhood Business District Strategy, the proposed changes are intended to improve how citizens, elected officials and City staff propose and review new development and re-use of existing buildings in Seattle neighborhoods. The proposed parking regulations help Code users by clearly stating the City's parking regulations in simple and clear text and charts. The proposed parking charts consolidate similar land use types, shortening and simplifying the lists of uses.

## Bicycle parking

### Background

In addition to the changes to the City's automobile parking requirements, changes to bicycle parking requirements are proposed. For the City to actively encourage bicycle transportation in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, bicycle parking in Seattle neighborhood business districts needs to be visible, accessible, convenient, and plentiful.

Like other North American cities, Seattle's current bicycle parking requirements are indexed primarily to the amount of off-street car parking required. Bicycle parking is required to be provided for commercial zones for certain uses (mostly retail and office) as 10% of the auto parking required when there are over 20 car spaces required. For institutions and Major Institutions, the amount of bicycle parking required is a percentage of the auto spaces and employees, respectively. For residential uses, bicycle parking is required according to the number of units provided, as seen in Table 20. New development can also reduce up to 10% of the required amount of automobile parking by providing bicycle parking on-site for certain land uses.

**Table 20:**  
**Current Multi-Family Bicycle Parking Requirements**

No. Residential Units	Requirement	Spaces per unit
5 -- 10	1	.2 to .1
11 -- 20	2	.1 to .18
More than 20 units	1 per 10 units	.1

This link between bicycle and auto parking spaces was developed in the 1980s (Seattle's bicycle parking regulations were added in 1987) when other methods to determine the level of bicycle parking demand were not available. There are several problems with the current approach:

1. **Levels of automobile use do not parallel levels of bicycle use.** In fact, the opposite is true. Areas with higher auto use such as along Aurora Ave. N. accommodate automobiles with large surface parking lots and wide roads. These features make bicycling less attractive and less safe. Yet, this is where the most bicycle parking would be required in the existing code.
2. **Flexibility and variances to allow less on-site auto parking lead to less bicycle parking allowed.** Consequently, tying bike parking to auto parking works counter to the desired result of encouraging bicycle use in areas where automobiles are discouraged. Where auto parking is restricted or requirements exempted (for example, the 1,500 square foot waiver for small businesses), more bicycle parking should be available to encourage and accommodate shifts towards bicycle use.
3. **Certain land uses such as schools, libraries, and parks, have no bicycle parking requirement under the current City rules.** These land uses attract a higher percentage of trips by people who have limited access to an automobile, or who are more likely not to drive due. For these uses, bicycle parking requirements should be based on a percentage of expected users. It may be appropriate to have higher requirements in order to accommodate bicycling for youth or to encourage more exercise.
4. **Transit stations currently do not have any bicycle parking requirement** and yet the City and the rail transit agencies expect a substantial percentage of transit riders to bike to access transit.
5. **Current rules do not distinguish between long and short-term bicycle parking** and thus do not provide the safe, convenient parking for different bicycle trips. Bicycle commuters to office buildings seek safe, dry bicycle storage inside a building's parking garage or somewhere similar where they can park their bike for a long time without risking bicycle damage or theft. Bicy-



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clists going to the local grocery store seek easy access to the store entrance for these short-term trips. When compared to automobile parking, it is easy to provide for both of these demands.

6. **Quality bicycle parking is critical for its use, and Seattle's current rules do not reflect current bicycle parking technology.** When developers provide bicycle parking, poor quality racks and bad installation techniques lead to wasted money and space. If bike racks are of poor quality or are not installed correctly, bicyclists will avoid the racks and park where they can safely lock their bike: nearby traffic signs, parking meters or trees. Appendix VI shows examples of poor quality bicycle parking at Seattle grocery stores, based on a survey completed by the Bicycle Alliance.

### **Bicycle Parking State of the Practice.**

Among national bicycle programs, the cities of Portland and Eugene, Oregon give guidance to Seattle, since those cities have similar transportation policies to encourage bicycle travel:

*City of Portland:* Portland reorganized its off-street bicycle parking requirements in 1997. Previously, bicycle parking amounts were indexed to site-provided auto parking. The Portland requirements now tie bike parking to net building area by land use and distinguish between short- and long-term parking. The new rules also include a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) bonus as an incentive to build facilities to support bike commuting such as showers and changing facilities. The City allows for a certain number of bicycle spaces to be substituted for required on-site auto parking.

*City of Eugene:* Eugene requires bicycle parking for a long list of land uses, including secondary schools and special event venues. Eugene requires that a greater percentage of the required parking be long-term or short-term depending on the demand. For instance, a grocery store would have more short-term bicycle parking and an office building would have more long-term bicycle parking. The City also has

extensive rules on the location and quality of the bicycle parking.

As part of the Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study, the City looked at Seattle's current bicycle parking requirements. Basing bicycle parking requirements on land use is an important step in the context of promoting bicycle parking, as steps are taken to limit or reduce the supply of automobile parking in the denser urban environment of Seattle's neighborhood business districts.

### **Recommendation**

#### ***Revise minimum parking requirements to provide for more bicycle parking.***

The City's bicycle parking requirements are proposed to be adjusted by adding short-term and long-term minimum requirements as well as distinguishing between inside and outside of urban centers and rail transit station areas. The new requirements are adjusted to be based on the square footage of a land use or other relevant characteristic, instead of the number of automobile spaces required for that land use. Table 21 provides examples of new bicycle parking requirements.

Both minimum *short-term* and *long-term* requirements are proposed. Short-term bike parking is designed for a bicycle to be parked for less than four hours and is typically used for shopping trips. Such parking must allow the bicycle frame and one wheel to be locked to the rack and must support the bicycle in a stable position without damage to its wheels, frame or components. Long-term bike parking is designed for a bicycle to be parked for over four hours and is typically used by employees cycling to work or for residential storage. Such parking must be secure, provided either through bicycle lockers, an indoor storage area with limited access, or racks that are covered and monitored, either in person within visual range or via camera. Long-term bicycle racks must meet the same design requirements as short-term racks.

**Table 21:**  
**Comparison of Existing and Proposed Bike Parking Requirements for Selected Uses**

Examples	Estimated Existing Bike Parking Requirement	Estimated New Short-Term Bike Parking Requirement	Estimated New Long-Term Bike Parking Requirement	Estimated New Bike Parking Requirement for Areas Inside Urban Centers or Station Area Overlays
Grocery store (50,000 sq. ft.)	10	12	4	25 short-term spaces instead of 12 spaces
Restaurant (15,000 sq. ft.)	5	1	4	8 short-term spaces instead of 4 spaces
Office building (50,000 sq. ft.)	5	1	12	25 long-term spaces inside instead of 12 spaces



## Appendix I: Proposed Changes to the Locational Criteria

Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
23.34.074 Neighborhood Commercial I zone, function and locational criteria.		
A. Function.	A. Function.	
<del>1. A Neighborhood Commercial zone is intended to be a small area composed primarily of businesses providing convenience retail sales and services to the adjoining residential neighborhood. These areas provide locations for single purpose commercial structures, multi-story mixed use development with commercial uses along the street front, or in limited circumstances multi-story residential structures.</del>	<u>To support or encourage a small shopping area that provides convenience retail sales and services to the adjoining residential neighborhood, where the following characteristics can be achieved:</u>	Title already indicates that this section applies to the NCI zone.  “Support or encourage” allows the zone to be mapped in an area where the desired character isn’t currently present but could be achieved through development.  “Shopping area” is more descriptive than “composed primarily of businesses.”  List of uses isn’t different than what one would expect in any commercial zone.
<del>2. Desired Characteristics:</del>		“Desired characteristics” is ambiguous. Does the phrase mean that the area should currently have those characteristics, or should it be able to have those characteristics in the future? It has been interpreted both ways. “where the following characteristics can be achieved” is clearer.
a. Variety of small neighborhood-serving businesses;	1. <u>A</u> variety of small neighborhood-serving businesses;	Minor change.
b. Continuous storefronts <del>with commercial use</del> , built to the front property line;	2. Continuous storefronts built to the front property line;	“Storefronts” implies commercial uses, non-commercial uses may be appropriate in some locations and are permitted.
c. Atmosphere <del>friendly to</del> pedestrians;	3. <u>An atmosphere attractive to</u> pedestrians;	Minor change.
d. Shoppers walk from store to store.	4. Shoppers walk from store to store.	Minor change.

Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
B. Locational Criteria. Neighborhood Commercial I zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following:	B. Locational Criteria. <u>The</u> Neighborhood Commercial I zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following <u>conditions</u> :	Minor change.
1. Existing Character. Small commercial areas surrounded by low-density residential areas; 2. Physical Conditions: a. Surroundings are low-density residential areas; d. Access is through low-density residential neighborhoods (i.e., commercial area will draw traffic through the neighborhood);	1. Generally, outside of Urban Centers and Urban Villages;	Areas outside of urban centers are generally surrounded by low-density residential areas. Provides clearer connection to the City's Comprehensive Plan.
<del>e. Generally, limited street capacity.</del>	<u>2. Generally, located on streets with limited capacity, such as collector arterials.</u>	Tying the locational criteria to specific street designations is clearer and less ambiguous than "limited street capacity" which could refer to on-street parking, congestion or street design.
<del>b. No physical edges to buffer the residential areas;</del>	<u>3. No physical edges to buffer the residential areas;</u>	No changes
c. Lack of vacant land or land appropriate for additional commercial development within the commercial area;	4. Small parcel sizes;	The NCI zone might be appropriate in an area with vacant land if it is outside of an urban village and on a small arterial, if parcel sizes are small and are likely to be developed individually.
f. Limited transit service;	<u>5. Limited transit service.</u>	No changes
g. Limited off-street parking capacity.		The NCI zone might be appropriate for an area with off-street parking, if it meets the other criteria.



Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
23.34.076 Neighborhood Commercial 2 (NC2) zone, function and locational criteria.		
A. Function.	A. Function.	
<del>1.—A pedestrian-oriented shopping area that provides a full range of household and personal goods and services, including convenience and specialty goods, to the surrounding neighborhoods. These areas provide locations for single purpose commercial structures, multi-story mixed use structures with commercial uses along the street front and multi-story residential structures.</del>	<u>To support or encourage a pedestrian-oriented shopping area that provides a full range of household and personal goods and services, including convenience and specialty goods, to the surrounding neighborhoods, that accommodates other uses that are compatible with the retail character of the area such as housing or offices, and where the following characteristics can be achieved:</u>	Expand list of uses to indicate that shopping isn't the only activity that occurs in this zone. Sentence removed provided no distinction between the NC2 zone and other commercial zones.
<del>2.—Desired Characteristics:</del>		"Desired characteristics" – see discussion above.
<del>a. Variety of small to medium-sized neighborhood-serving businesses;</del>	<u>1. A variety of small neighborhood-serving businesses;</u>	Minor change.
<del>b. Continuous storefronts with commercial use, built to the front property line;</del>	<u>2. Continuous storefronts built to the front property line;</u>	"Storefronts" implies commercial uses, non-commercial uses may be appropriate in some locations and are permitted.
<del>c. Pedestrian-friendly atmosphere;</del>	<u>3. An atmosphere attractive to pedestrians;</u>	Remove jargon
<del>d. Shoppers can drive to the area, but walk from store to store.</del>	<u>4. Shoppers walk from store to store.</u>	Some shoppers will drive to these areas, but others will walk, bike or use transit.
B. Locational Criteria. Neighborhood Commercial 2 zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following:	B. Locational Criteria. <u>The Neighborhood Commercial 2 zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following conditions:</u>	Minor change

Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
<del>1. Existing Character:</del> <del>a. Medium-sized node generally surrounded by low- to medium-density residential areas; or</del> <del>b. Small commercial area located at the edge of a larger business area, which provides a transition between intense commercial activity and surrounding areas; or</del> <del>c. Area in the core of an established commercial district characterized by a concentration of small retail and service uses; or</del> <del>d. Commercial area along major arterial where lots are generally small and shallow, and are surrounded by low-density residential areas.</del> <del>2. Physical Conditions Favoring Designation as NC2:</del> <del>a. Surrounded by low- to medium-density residential areas;</del> <del>d. Access is through low- and medium-density residential areas;</del>	<u>1. Generally, the primary business district in Residential Urban Villages or secondary business districts in Urban Centers or Hub Urban Villages, or larger business districts outside of urban villages;</u>	The new criterion captures the “Existing Character” criteria by providing referencing the urban village designations in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
<del>e. Located on streets with good capacity (major traffic streets and minor arterials), but generally not on major transportation corridors;</del>	<u>2. Located on streets with good capacity, such as major traffic streets and minor arterials, but generally not on major transportation corridors;</u>	Minor change.
<del>b. Lack of strong edges to buffer the residential areas;</del>	<u>3. Lack of strong edges to buffer the residential areas;</u>	No change
	<u>4. A mix of small and medium sized parcels.</u>	Parcel size provides a good indication of what the future character of an area can become.
<del>c. Lack of vacant land or land appropriate for additional commercial development within the commercial area;</del>		The NC2 zone might be appropriate in an area with vacant land if it meets the other criteria.

Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
f. Limited transit service (i.e., a few routes);	5. Limited <u>or moderate</u> transit service;	Moderate transit service can help support NC2-zoned areas and is found in many of the urban village areas that this zone is most appropriate for.
g. Limited off-street parking capacity; may include a parking area for a supermarket or other larger use.		The NC2 zone might be appropriate for an area with off-street parking, if it meets the other criteria.
23.34.078 Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3) zone, function and locational criteria.		
A. Function. <del>†.—A pedestrian-oriented shopping district serving the surrounding neighborhood and a larger community or citywide clientele. The area provides for comparison shopping with a wide range of retail goods and services. The area also provides offices and business support services that are compatible with the retail character of the area and may also include residences. These areas provide locations for single purpose commercial structures, multi-story mixed use structures with commercial uses along with the street front and multi-story residential structures.</del>	A. Function. <u>To support or encourage a pedestrian-oriented shopping district that serves the surrounding neighborhood and a larger community, citywide, or regional clientele; that provides comparison shopping for a wide range of retail goods and services; that incorporates offices, business support services, and residences that are compatible with the retail character of the area; and where the following characteristics can be achieved:</u>	“Support or encourage” allows the zone to be mapped in an area where the desired character isn’t currently present but could be achieved through development.  Some existing NC3 areas (for example Broadway, the Ave. and Northgate) are regional shopping destinations.  Simplify language.  Final sentence listing uses isn’t different than what one would expect in any commercial zone.  “Desired characteristics” - See NCI, above
2. Desired Characteristics.		
a. Variety of retail businesses at street level;	a. <u>A variety of sizes and types of retail and other commercial</u> businesses at street level;	“Retail” is narrower than the range of uses one finds in this zone.
b. Continuous storefronts built to the front property line;	b. Continuous storefronts built to the front property line;	No change.
c. Intense pedestrian activity;	c. Intense pedestrian activity;	No change.
d. Shoppers <del>can drive to the area, but will</del> walk around from store to store;	d. Shoppers walk around from store to store;	Some shoppers will drive to these areas, but others will walk, bike or use transit.

Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
e. <del>Cycling and transit</del> are important means of access.	e. <u>Transit is an</u> important means of access.	While cycling is an important transportation mode to accommodate in all business districts, to require that all NC3 zone areas have a sizable percentage of customers arriving by bicycle is unreasonable.
B. Locational Criteria. The Neighborhood Commercial 3 zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following:	B. Locational Criteria. The Neighborhood Commercial 3 zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following <u>conditions</u> :	Minor change
<p>1. Existing Character.</p> <p>a. Major commercial nodes surrounded by medium- to high-density residential areas or other commercial areas; or</p> <p>b. Commercial, retail-oriented strip along a major arterial with significant amounts of retail frontage and generally surrounded by medium-density residential areas; or</p> <p>c. Shopping centers.</p> <p>2. Physical Conditions Favoring Designation as NC3.</p>	<p>1. Generally, the primary business district in an urban center or hub urban village;</p>	The new criterion captures the “Existing Character” criteria by providing referencing the urban village designations in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
a. Served by principal arterial;	<u>2.</u> Served by principal arterial;	No changes
b. Separated from low-density residential areas by physical edges, less-intense commercial areas or more-intense residential areas;	<u>3.</u> Separated from low-density residential areas by physical edges, less-intense commercial areas or more-intense residential areas;	No changes
c. Highly accessible for large numbers of people (considering present and anticipated congestion) so that intense activity of a major commercial node can be accommodated;		Concept is covered by #2 and #4.
d. Combination of circulation and transit system accommodates commercial traffic without drawing traffic through residential areas;		Concept is covered by #2 and #4.

Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
e. Excellent transit service;	<u>4.</u> Excellent transit service.	No changes.
f. Presence of large, perhaps shared, off-street parking lots; land available for additional parking, or other means to accommodate parking demand.		Because new development is required to provide parking to serve its tenants and customers, there are always “other means to accommodate parking demand.”
23.34.080 Commercial I (CI) zone, function and locational criteria.		
A. Function. <del>An auto-oriented, primarily retail/service commercial area, that serves surrounding neighborhoods and the larger community or citywide clientele. The area provides a wide range of commercial services, including retail, offices and business support services, and may also provide for residential uses at limited densities.</del>	A. Function. <u>To maintain an existing</u> auto-oriented, primarily retail/service commercial area, that serves surrounding neighborhoods and the larger community or citywide clientele.	“Maintain” reflects the City’s policies, which indicate that new auto-oriented zones are generally not appropriate.  Removes list of uses consistent with changes to other zones’ locational criteria.
B. Locational Criteria. Commercial I zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following: <del>1. Existing Character: a. Shopping centers; or b. Shopping areas along arterials where customers drive from one (1) individual business to another. 2. Physical Conditions Favoring Designation as CI.</del>	B. Locational Criteria. <u>The</u> Commercial I zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following <u>conditions</u> :  <u>1. Outside of urban centers and urban villages;</u>	New criteria ties the zone to the Comprehensive Plan’s urban village strategy. NC3 and CI zones were both identified as appropriate for “shopping centers,” providing little direction. Using the Comprehensive Plan’s designations is clearer.
a. Readily accessible from a principal arterial;	<u>2.</u> Readily accessible from a principal arterial;	No changes.
b. Presence of edges that buffer residential or commercial areas of lesser intensity, such as changes in street layout or platting pattern;	<u>3.</u> Presence of edges that buffer residential or commercial areas of lesser intensity, such as changes in street layout or platting pattern;	No changes.
c. <del>Predominance of large lots that can accommodate a wide range of commercial activity;</del>	<u>4.</u> Predominance of large <u>parcels</u> ;	Simpler language.



Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
d. Limited pedestrian access the <del>public right-of-way, curb cuts, auto movement or parking lots create an environment which is unfriendly to pedestrian activity;</del>	<u>5. Limited pedestrian and transit access.</u>	Simpler language, transit added.
e. Presence of large, perhaps shared, off-street parking lots; readily accessible from major transportation corridors or arterials.		The predominance of large parcels in areas separated from the surrounding neighborhood generally leads to large off-street parking lots. Because it's the similar to NC3 and C2 criteria on parking, it provides little direction regarding where this zone may be appropriate.
23.34.082 Commercial 2 (C2) zone, function and locational criteria.		
A. Function. <del>An auto-oriented, primarily non-retail commercial area that provides a wide range of commercial activities serving a citywide function. These areas provide employment opportunities, business support services and locations for light manufacturing and warehouse uses, and may also provide for residential uses at limited densities.</del>	A. Function. <u>To maintain an existing</u> auto-oriented, primarily non-retail commercial area that provides a wide range of commercial activities serving a citywide function, <u>including uses such as manufacturing and warehousing uses that are less appropriate in more-retail-oriented commercial areas.</u>	"Maintain" reflects the City's policies, which indicate that new auto-oriented zones are generally not appropriate.  Simplifies language.
B. Locational Criteria. Commercial 2 zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following: 1. Existing Character: a. <del>Major commercial nodes characterized by heavy, non-retail commercial activity, often including a few major employees; or</del> b. <del>A commercial strip located along a major arterial characterized by heavy, non-retail commercial activity.</del> 2. Physical Conditions Favoring Designation as C2.	B. Locational Criteria. <u>The</u> Commercial 2 zone designation is most appropriate in areas generally characterized by the following <u>conditions:</u> <u>1. Outside of urban centers and urban villages;</u>	The "Existing character" section is removed to focus analyses on whether the conditions to create the desired character are in place. If a plan is in place to transform an area away from the character of these zones, that type of change is supported by the City's policies.  New criteria ties the zone to the Comprehensive Plan's urban village strategy.

Existing Criteria (showing deletions)	Proposed Criteria (showing additions)	Notes
b. Possibly adjacent to manufacturing/industrial zones;	<u>2.</u> Possibly adjacent to manufacturing/industrial zones;	No change
a. Readily accessible from a principal arterial;	<u>3.</u> Readily accessible from a principal arterial;	No change
c. Presence of edges that buffer residential or commercial areas of lesser intensity, such as changes in street layout or platting pattern;	<u>4.</u> Presence of edges that buffer residential or commercial areas of lesser intensity, such as changes in street layout or platting pattern;	No change
d. Predominance of large <del>lots which can accommodate a wide range of heavy commercial and light manufacturing activity;</del>	<u>5.</u> Predominance of large <u>parcels</u> ;	Simpler language
e. Limited pedestrian access.	<u>6.</u> Limited pedestrian <u>and transit</u> access.	Transit added.



## Appendix II: Proposed Changes to the Use Chart

Current Category	Recommended changes
<b>I. COMMERCIAL USE</b>	No changes
A. Retail Sales and Services.	Delete category, some uses outside the category might meet the definition of <i>retail sales and services</i>
1. Personal and Household Retail Sales and Services	Change to <i>sales and services, general</i> to reflect that many uses provide goods and services to a broad variety of customers including individuals and households but also businesses, governments and institutions.
a. Multi-purpose convenience stores	Change to <i>retail sales, multipurpose</i> to aid in finding the use in the list of definitions and remove confusion over what is meant by “convenience store”.
b. General retail sales and service	Change to <i>retail sales and services, general</i> to aid in finding the use in the list of definitions.
c. Major durables sales, service and rental	Move under <i>sales and services, heavy</i> to reflect lower parking requirement and higher need for truck access for this use than for other uses under the category.
2. Medical Services	Add <i>animal health services</i> and <i>mortuary services</i> to reflect similar impacts.
3. Animal Services	Delete category - see sub-categories.
a. Animal health services	Incorporate into <i>medical services</i>
b. Kennels	Create one <i>animal shelters and kennels</i> use to reflect that the two uses are very similar and have similar impacts. Add <i>doggy day cares</i> that include outdoor play areas to definition.
c. Animal shelters	
d. Pet grooming services	Becomes part of <i>general retail sales and service</i> to reflect focus on providing services to households and minimal impact of use.
4. Automotive Retail Sales and Services	Rename <i>sales and services, automotive</i> consistent with other categories
a. Gas Stations	Becomes part of new <i>retail sales and services, automotive</i> to recognize similarities with uses like <i>auto parts stores, minor auto repair shops</i> and <i>car washes</i> .
b. Sales and rental of motorized vehicles	No change
c. Vehicle repair, minor	Becomes part of new <i>retail sales and services, automotive</i>
d. Vehicle repair, major	Becomes <i>vehicle repair, major automotive</i>
e. Car wash	Becomes part of new <i>retail sales and services, automotive</i>
f. Towing services	Becomes a <i>transportation facilities: parking and moorage</i> use to reflect similarity with <i>parking lots</i> and <i>dry boat storage</i> .

Current Category	Recommended changes
g. Automotive parts or accessory sales	Becomes part of new <i>retail sales and services, automotive</i>
5. Marine Retail Sales and Services	Rename <i>sales and services, marine</i> consistent with other categories
a. Sales and rental of large boats	No change
b. Vessel repair, minor	No change
c. Vessel repair, major	No changes
d. Marine service station	No changes
e. Dry storage of boats	Move under <i>transportation facilities: parking and moorage</i> simplify title to <i>dry boat storage</i>
f. Recreational marinas	Combine these uses as <i>boat moorage</i> and move under <i>transportation facilities: parking and moorage</i>
g. Commercial moorage	
h. Sale of boat parts or accessories	No changes
6. Eating and Drinking Establishments	No changes
a. Restaurants	No changes
b. Restaurants with drive-in lanes	Remove use. Drive-ins will be treated as a development standard in 23.47A.028.
c. Drinking establishment	No changes
7. Lodging	Allow <i>lodging</i> up to 10K sf in NCI and 25K sf in NC2. With maximum size limits similar to other uses, impacts of <i>lodging</i> on a neighborhood business district are minimized. Allow <i>bed and breakfasts</i> in new buildings. The mixed-use nature of the use is appropriate to commercial areas, whether in a new or existing building.
a. Hotel	Refer only to <i>lodging</i> in the Commercial code, distinction between <i>hotels</i> and <i>motels</i> is more relevant in other parts of the code. Negative impacts of the auto-oriented nature of motels are addressed through development standards.
b. Motel	
c. Bed and breakfast	
8. Mortuary Services	Becomes part of “Medical services” because of similar impacts.
9. Existing Cemeteries	Becomes own category (XIII. <i>Cemeteries</i> ). Indicate that cemeteries are prohibited, but continue to allow for their expansion through language regarding nonconformities in Chapter 23.42.
B. Principal Use Parking	Move under <i>transportation facilities: parking and moorage</i> to reflect the similarity with other types of <i>transportation facilities</i> , such as <i>bus bases</i> , and <i>dry boat storage</i> . <i>Park and ride lots</i> and <i>park and pool lots</i> would become narrower uses to <i>principal use parking</i> .



Current Category	Recommended changes
C. Non-Household Sales and Service	Becomes <i>sales and services, heavy</i> to reflect the similarity of impacts between many of these non-household uses and <i>major durables</i> uses.
1. Business support services	Merge these uses under the new category <i>retail sales and services, non-household</i> to reflect similar impacts among these uses.
2. Business incubator	
3. Sales, service and rental of office equipment	
4. Sales, service and rental of commercial equipment and construction materials	Merge these uses under the new category <i>heavy commercial sales</i> to reflect similar impacts between these uses in terms of truck activity.
5. Sale of heating fuel	
6. Heavy commercial services	Refer only to <i>heavy commercial services</i> in the Commercial code. Add definition for <i>building maintenance services</i> which has been mentioned as a part of <i>heavy commercial services</i> , but has never been defined.
a. Construction services	
b. Commercial laundries	
D. Offices	Delete category, see below.
1. Customer service office	Becomes part of <i>general retail sales and services</i> and <i>non-household retail sales and services</i> to reflect similarity of impacts, space needs, parking requirements and relationship to the surrounding neighborhood to these categories.
2. Administrative office	Change to <i>office</i> to reflect that <i>customer service office</i> will no longer be a distinct use. <i>Administrative offices</i> are the types of uses that are commonly thought of as offices.
E. Entertainment	No changes
1. Places of Public Assembly	Remove category - <i>theaters and spectator sports facilities</i> is a more easily understood title.
a. Performing arts theater	Combine as <i>theaters and spectator sports facilities</i> which are treated the same in commercial areas.
b. Spectator sports facility	
c. Lecture and meeting halls	
d. Motion picture theater	
e. Adult motion picture theater	No changes, would not be part of the <i>theater and spectator sports facility</i> category.
f. Adult panorams	
2. Participant Sports and Recreation	Remove category.
a. Indoor	Becomes <i>indoor sports and recreation</i>
b. Outdoor	Becomes <i>outdoor sports and recreation</i>
F. Wholesale Showroom	Move under <i>heavy sales and services</i> as <i>wholesale showrooms</i> are similar to other uses in that category.

Current Category	Recommended changes
G. Mini-Warehouse	Move these three uses into a new <i>storage</i> category to reflect similarity between these uses.
H. Warehouse	
I. Outdoor Storage	
J. Transportation Facilities	Would no longer be <i>commercial</i> uses, these uses may or may not be attached to a business. Add a new <i>rail transit facilities</i> use to capture light rail, monorail and streetcar systems.
1. Personal transportation services	Move under new <i>vehicle storage and maintenance</i> category which will include uses where vehicles are stored, dispatched and repaired.
2. Passenger terminals	No changes
3. Cargo terminals	No changes
4. Transit vehicle base	Move under new <i>vehicle storage and maintenance</i> category, rename <i>bus base</i> to differentiate from <i>rail transit facilities</i> . “Bus” rather than “transit” is used in the current definition, and light rail and monorail transit facilities are currently regulated separately.
5. Helistops	Move under new <i>air transportation facilities</i> category.
6. Heliports	
7. Airport, land-based	
8. Airport, water-based	
9. Railroad switchyard	Move under new <i>vehicle storage and maintenance</i> category
10. Railroad switchyard with mechanized hump	Remove category, not relevant in commercial areas, <i>railroad switchyards</i> are already prohibited (retain in Industrial zones).
K. Food Processing and Craft Work	Refer only to <i>food processing and craft work</i> in the commercial code, these uses are treated the same in commercial areas and do not need to be listed separately.
1. Food processing for human consumption	
2. Custom and craft work	
L. Research and Development Laboratories	No changes
II. SALVAGE AND RECYCLING	Remove category to simplify chart. <i>Solid waste management</i> and <i>Recycling</i> become two uses under <i>Utilities</i>
A. Recycling Collection Station	Remove category, <i>recycling collection stations</i> are no longer being used.
B. Recycling Center	Becomes <i>recycling</i>
C. Salvage Yard	Becomes part of new <i>solid waste management</i> category
III. UTILITIES	No changes
A. Utility Service Uses	Change to <i>utilities, general</i>
B. Major Communication Utility	No changes

Current Category	Recommended changes
C. Minor Communication Utility	No changes
D. Solid Waste Transfer Station	Becomes part of <i>solid waste management</i>
E. Power Plants	No changes
F. Sewage Treatment Plants	No changes
G. Solid Waste Incineration Facility	Becomes part of <i>solid waste management</i>
H. Solid Waste Landfill	Becomes part of <i>solid waste management</i>
IV. MANUFACTURING	No changes
A. Light Manufacturing	No changes
B. General Manufacturing	No changes
C. Heavy Manufacturing	No changes
V. HIGH-IMPACT USES	No changes
VI. INSTITUTIONS	Create <i>institutions not listed below</i> line to capture institutions that are treated the same in commercial areas. Separate uses are retained in other parts of the code. Add <i>library</i> to list of institutions to reflect that they are permitted in pedestrian areas.
A. Institute for Advanced Study	Don't list separately, covered by <i>institutions not listed below</i>
B. Private Club	
C. Child Care Center	No changes
D. Museum	No changes
E. School, Elementary or Secondary	No changes
F. College	Don't list separately, covered by <i>institutions not listed below</i>
G. Community Center	Merge these two uses as <i>community clubs and centers</i> they are very similar and are regulated the same.
H. Community Club	
I. Vocational or Fine Arts School	Don't list separately, covered by <i>institutions not listed below</i>
J. Hospital	
K. Religious Facility	No changes
L. University	Don't list separately, definition refers readers to <i>college</i>
M. Major Institutions within a Major Institution Overlay District subject to Chapter 23.69	Don't list separately, covered by <i>institutions not listed below</i>
VII. PUBLIC FACILITIES	No changes
A. Jails	No changes
B. Work-release Center	No changes

Current Category	Recommended changes
VIII. PARK AND POOL/RIDE LOT	Remove broad category, move uses under <i>transportation facilities</i> : <i>parking and moorage</i> : <i>principal use parking</i> because these are principal use parking lots.
A. Park and Pool Lots	
B. Park and Ride Lots	
IX. RESIDENTIAL	No changes
A. Single-family Dwelling Units	Don't list separately. Create <i>residential uses not listed below</i> line to capture residential uses that are treated similarly in commercial areas. Separate uses remain in parts of the code where difference is relevant.
B. Multifamily Structures	
C. Congregate Residences	
D. Floating Homes	
E. Mobile Home Park	
F. Artist Studio/Dwelling	
G. Caretaker's Quarters	No changes
H. Adult Family Homes	Don't list separately, covered by <i>residential uses not listed below</i>
I. Home Occupations	
J. Nursing Homes	
K. Assisted Living Facilities	
X. LIVE-WORK UNITS	No changes
XI. OPEN SPACE	Don't list separate uses in commercial code, as they are treated the same. Rename <i>parks and open space</i> to differentiate from "open space" which is currently used to identify on-site features of development.
A. Parks	
B. Playgrounds	
XII. AGRICULTURAL USES	No changes
A. Animal Husbandry	No changes
B. Horticultural Uses	No changes
C. Aquaculture	No changes

## Appendix III: Edits to Other Parts of the Code

In order to maintain consistency across the Municipal Code, the proposed changes to simplify the chart of commercial uses that the City regulates require amendments to many other sections of the Code. Most of the following changes are intended to be non-substantive, in other words they are intended to change terms, but not allow anything that is currently prohibited, or prohibit anything that is currently allowed. Substantive changes are discussed in the Director's Report. Changes to rezone criteria (SMC 23.34) are discussed in Chapter 2: Commercial Zones and Appendix 1: Changes to locational criteria; Changes to definitions (SMC 23.84) are discussed in Chapter 3: Uses, Appendix 2: Proposed changes to the use chart, or where the specific term to be changed is discussed; Changes to parking regulations (SMC 23.54) are discussed in Chapter 5: Parking.

SMC Code Section	Summary of recommended changes
3.20.320 TDR Bank	Human Services Department section change: update reference to definitions chapter
10.08.140 Definitions.	Alarm Systems section change: update reference to definitions chapter
15.54.010 Definitions.	Monorail Guideways section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.20.004 Exemptions from platting regulations.	General Platting Provisions section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.34.007 Rezone Evaluation	Amendments to official land use map (rezones) section change; remove requirement that the City's Comprehensive Plan be amended before an overlay adopted pursuant to a neighborhood plan can be rezoned. See Chapter 2: Commercial Zones.
23.34.0077 Neighborhood Commercial 2/Residential (NC2/R) designation	Amendments to official land use map (rezones) section change: delete rezone criteria
23.34.0079 Neighborhood Commercial 3/Residential (NC3/R) designation	Amendments to official land use map (rezones) section change: delete rezone criteria
23.34.0086 Locational criteria–Pedestrian District 1 (P1) overlay	Amendments to official land use map (rezones) section change: delete rezone criteria
23.34.0088 Locational criteria–Pedestrian District 2 (P2) overlay	Amendments to official land use map (rezones) section change: delete rezone criteria
23.41.012 Development standard departures	Early Project Implementation (Design Review) section change: simplify language by specifying things that aren't appropriate for departures, rather than things that are appropriate for departures.
23.42.050 Home occupations	New centralized location for <i>home occupation</i> standards
23.42.052 Keeping of Animals	New centralized location for <i>keeping of animals</i> standards
23.42.106 Expansion of Nonconforming Uses	Add a new Section F to provide a new centralized location for expansion of <i>existing cemeteries</i>
23.42.108 Change from nonconforming use to conforming use	Allows change of use from nonconforming use to a conforming use without requiring additional parking
23.43.040 Accessory uses and structures	RSL section change: references new centralized location for <i>home occupation</i> standards in 23.42 General Use Provisions



<b>SMC Code Section</b>	<b>Summary of recommended changes</b>
23.44.006 Principal uses permitted outright.	Single Family section change: Removes language regarding <i>existing cemeteries</i> (see 23.42.106) Change <i>parks</i> and <i>playgrounds</i> to <i>parks and open space</i> ; remove redundant term <i>preschool</i> .
23.44.015 Allowance for larger households.	Single Family section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.44.022 Institutions	Single Family section change: update term <i>library</i>
23.44.026 Use of landmark structures.	Single Family section change: update reference to Parking chapter (23.54)
23.44.048 Keeping of animals	Single Family section change: References new location for Keeping of animals provisions in 23.42 General Use Provisions
23.44.050 Home occupations	Single Family section change: References new location for Home occupation provisions in 23.42 General Use Provisions
23.45.004 Principal uses permitted outright	Multifamily section change: removes language regarding <i>existing cemeteries</i> (see 23.42.106) Change <i>parks</i> and <i>playgrounds</i> to <i>parks and open space</i> .
23.45.110 Ground-floor business and commercial use in Midrise and Highrise zones.	Multifamily section change: change term <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> .
23.45.124 Landmark structures.	Multifamily section change; update reference to Parking chapter
23.45.148 Keeping of animals	Multifamily section change: provide reference to new location for <i>keeping of animals</i> provisions.
23.45.152 Home occupations	Multifamily section change: provide reference to new location for <i>home occupation</i> provisions.
23.46.004 Uses.	Residential-Commercial section change: change term <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> .
23.48.006 Prohibited uses.	Seattle Mixed section change: combine <i>animal shelters</i> and <i>kennels</i> ; change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.48.032 Required parking and loading	Seattle Mixed section change: remove payment-in-lieu provisions and parking reductions provisions which only apply in South Lake Union to reflect that no parking will be required in that Urban Center.
23.49.025 Street-level use requirements.	Downtown section change: remove category <i>retail sales and services</i> and list constituent parts.
23.49.044 Downtown Office Core 1, prohibited uses.	Downtown section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.49.062 Downtown Office Core 2, prohibited uses.	Downtown section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.49.092 Downtown Retail Core, prohibited uses.	Downtown section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.49.118 Downtown Mixed Commercial, prohibited uses.	Downtown section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>

<b>SMC Code Section</b>	<b>Summary of recommended changes</b>
23.49.126 Downtown Mixed Commercial, ratios for public benefit features.	Downtown section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.49.144 Downtown Mixed Residential, prohibited uses.	Downtown section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.49.320 Downtown Harborfront 2, prohibited uses.	Downtown section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.49.338 Pike Market Mixed, prohibited uses.	Downtown section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i> ; Recognize that <i>principal use parking</i> will be considered a transportation facility.
23.50.002 Scope of provisions.	Industrial section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.50.012 Permitted and Prohibited Uses	Industrial section change: Update Chart A based on new use categories.
23.50.014 Conditional uses.	Industrial section change: change <i>transit vehicle base</i> to <i>bus base</i>
23.50.015 Major Phased Development.	Industrial section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.54.015 Required parking	Parking section change; repeal and replace with a new section implementing recommendations from Chapter 5: Parking, containing new parking requirements and new charts identifying required parking by use, updating names of uses and requirements: Parking for Nonresidential Uses; Parking for Residential Uses; Parking for Public Uses and Institutions; Reduction to Parking Required in Pedestrian-Designated Zones; and Parking for Bicycles.
23.54.016 Major Institutions -- Parking and transportation.	Parking section change; update reference to 23.54.015 Required Parking
23.54.020 Parking quantity exceptions	Parking section change: simplify language; update based on changes to 23.54.015
23.54.030 Parking space standards.	Parking section change: update based on changes to 23.54.015
23.57.008 Development standards.	Communications Regulations section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.61.008 Prohibited Uses.	Station Area Overlay change: change <i>dry storage of boats</i> to <i>dry boat storage</i> ; combine <i>sale of heating fuel and sales, service and rental of commercial equipment and construction materials</i> as <i>heavy commercial sales</i> ; change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.61.010 Location and access to parking.	Station Area Overlay section change; delete, would be redundant to the base zoning
23.61.012 Single-purpose residential development.	Station Area Overlay section change; delete, would be redundant to the base zoning
23.61.014 Nonconforming uses.	Station Area Overlay change; Change <i>gas stations</i> and <i>minor vehicle repair</i> to <i>automotive retail sales and services</i>

SMC Code Section	Summary of recommended changes
23.66.122 Prohibited Uses.	Pioneer Square Preservation District change; list <i>animal services</i> uses separately; combine <i>sale of heating fuel and sales, service and rental of commercial equipment and construction materials</i> as <i>heavy commercial sales</i> ; recognize that <i>principal use parking and rail transit facilities</i> will be considered <i>transportation facilities</i> ; change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i>
23.66.130 Street-level uses.	Pioneer Square Preservation District section change; rewrite to list subcategories under current <i>retail sales and services</i> category which will be removed.
23.66.322 Prohibited uses.	International Special Review District section change: change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling and solid waste management</i> ; combine <i>sale of heating fuel and sales, service and rental of commercial equipment and construction materials</i> as <i>heavy commercial sales</i> ; recognize that <i>principal use parking and rail transit facilities</i> will be considered <i>transportation facilities</i> ; list <i>animal services</i> uses separately
23.66.326 Street-level uses.	International Special Review District section change: change <i>experimental laboratories</i> to <i>research and development laboratories</i> (the term used elsewhere in the code); change term <i>places of public assembly</i> to <i>theaters and spectator sports facilities</i>
23.67.050 Use restrictions-Prohibited uses.	Southeast Seattle Reinvestment Area section change: change <i>animal control shelters</i> to <i>animal shelters and kennels</i> ; change <i>recycling centers</i> to <i>recycling uses</i>
23.69.024 Major Institution designation.	Major Institution Overlay section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.71.008 Development along major pedestrian streets.	Northgate Overlay section change: Change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durable retail sales</i> ; and <i>parks</i> to <i>parks and open space</i>
23.71.016 Parking and access	Northgate Overlay District section change; update reference to Parking section; change term <i>commercial retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and service</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>
23.71.038 Standards for mixed use development in commercial zones within the Northgate Overlay District.	Northgate Overlay District section change; update reference to Commercial chapter
23.71.044 Standards for single-purpose residential development in Commercial zones within the Northgate Overlay District.	Northgate Overlay District section change; move definition of and conditional use criteria for <i>single purpose residential</i> development into the Northgate Overlay to maintain consistency with current code
23.72.008 Uses permitted in specified areas within the Sand Point Overlay District.	Sand Point Overlay section change: change <i>participant sports and recreation</i> to <i>indoor sports and recreation</i> and <i>outdoor sports and recreation</i>
23.73.008 Uses	Pike/Pine Overlay section change; update language to be consistent with new street-level development standards in Commercial code. Remove subsection C. Single purpose residential structures, as these provisions would be more strict than locations outside the Pike/Pine overlay, with the possible effect of discouraging new housing development.
23.73.010 Development Standards	Pike/Pine Overlay section change; update <i>open space</i> requirements and references to reflect change to <i>residential amenity</i> spaces that will apply in the underlying zoning. Remove reference to 23.54.015 Required parking, which was redundant and will become moot due to removal of minimum parking requirements in urban centers

<b>SMC Code Section</b>	<b>Summary of recommended changes</b>
23.74.008 Uses.	Stadium Transition Area Overlay change: consolidate <i>community clubs</i> and <i>community centers</i> ; change <i>salvage and recycling</i> to <i>recycling</i> and <i>solid waste management</i> ; list <i>animal services</i> uses separately; change <i>transit vehicle base</i> to <i>bus base</i>
23.76.026 Vesting of development rights.	Procedures for Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions section change: update reference to definitions chapter
23.84 Definitions	<p>Replace with a new Definitions Chapter, Chapter 23.84A</p> <p>Update definitions to be consistent with new Use chart and categories (see Appendix II)</p> <p>Add definitions for new code concepts (<i>street facing façade</i>, <i>street-level façade</i>)</p> <p>Provide more description of the components that unify broad categories of uses (<i>entertainment, eating and drinking establishment, food processing and craft work, residential, transportation facilities</i>)</p> <p>Remove definitions that are no longer needed (<i>Airport Height Overlay District, processing and craft work, principle commercial street, retail sales and service</i>)</p> <p>Move definitions from the Parking chapter (23.54.015) to the definitions chapter (<i>bedroom, Center City neighborhoods, median family income</i>)</p> <p>Clarify confusing definitions (<i>business establishment, lodging</i>)</p> <p>Provide better references to the Comprehensive Plan (<i>neighborhood plan, urban center, urban center village, urban village, hub urban village, residential urban village</i>)</p> <p>Change definition of short-term parking to be less than four hours, rather than less than six hours (see Chapter 5: Parking)</p> <p>Re-alphabetize and update references where appropriate.</p>
23.86.022 Street-facing facades	Measurements section change: add new section describing street-facing facades
23.86.023 Street-level facades	Measurements section change: add new section describing street-level facades
23.91.002 Scope	Citation– Hearings– Penalties change: Update references to 23.42 General Use Provisions.
25.08.225 Residential disturbance.	Noise Control section change: update reference to definitions

Edits to the Shoreline chapter of the Code (SMC 23.60) are all non-substantive changes to keep terms used in that chapter consistent with terms used elsewhere in the Code. Because the State Shorelines Hearings Board must review changes to this chapter, changes to this chapter are separated from the rest of the proposed Land Use Code changes in a separate ordinance. The following table displays proposed changes to the Shoreline Code.

<b>SMC Code Section</b>	<b>Summary of recommended changes</b>
23.60.246 Prohibited uses in the CN Environment	Shoreline section change: remove term <i>salvage and recycling</i> which will be considered <i>utilities</i> which are already prohibited.
23.60.306 Prohibited uses in the CP Environment	Shoreline section change: remove term <i>salvage and recycling</i> which will be considered <i>utilities</i> which are already prohibited.
23.60.365 Administrative conditional uses in the CR Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>

<b>SMC Code Section</b>	<b>Summary of recommended changes</b>
23.60.368 Prohibited uses in the CR Environment	Shoreline section change: remove term <i>salvage and recycling</i> which will be considered <i>utilities</i> which are already prohibited.
23.60.424 Special uses permitted on waterfront lots in the CM Environment	Shoreline section change: consolidate <i>transportation facilities</i> which will be separate from <i>commercial uses</i> ; change <i>dry storage of boats</i> to <i>dry boat storage</i>
23.60.426 Conditional uses permitted in the CM Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>
23.60.430 Prohibited principal uses on waterfront lots in the CM Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage uses</i> from <i>commercial uses</i> ; change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i> ; list <i>animal services</i> uses separately; update <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i> ; update <i>salvage and recycling</i>
23.60.484 Special uses in the CW Environment	Shoreline section change: consolidate <i>transportation facilities</i> which will be separate from <i>commercial uses</i>
23.60.486 Conditional uses in the CW Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>
23.60.488 Prohibited uses in the CW Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i> and remove term <i>salvage and recycling</i> which will be considered <i>utilities</i> which are already prohibited
23.60.544 Prohibited uses on waterfront lots in the UR Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage uses</i> from <i>commercial uses</i>
23.60.600 Uses permitted outright on waterfront lots in the US Environment.	Shoreline section change: insert appropriate date, consolidate <i>storage uses</i> , change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>
23.60.604 Conditional uses on waterfront lots in the US Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>
23.60.606 Prohibited uses on upland lots in the US Environment	Shoreline section change: list <i>animal services</i> uses separately, remove <i>mortuary services</i> which will be considered <i>medical services</i> , update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i> , identify <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage uses</i> separate from <i>commercial uses</i> , update <i>salvage and recycling</i> uses.
23.60.608 Permitted uses on upland lots in the US Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage uses</i> from <i>commercial uses</i> , list <i>animal services</i> uses separately, remove <i>mortuary services</i> which will be considered <i>medical services</i> , update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i> , remove <i>recycling collection stations</i> which will no longer be identified as a separate use.
23.60.636 View corridors in the US Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>dry storage of boats</i> to <i>dry boat storage</i>
23.60.660 Uses permitted outright on waterfront lots in the UH Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage uses</i> from <i>commercial uses</i> ; change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>



<b>SMC Code Section</b>	<b>Summary of recommended changes</b>
23.60.664 Administrative conditional uses permitted on waterfront lots in the UH Environment.	Shoreline section change: identify <i>storage</i> uses separate from commercial uses; change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i>
23.60.668 Prohibited uses on waterfront lots in the UH Environment	Shoreline section change: list <i>animal services</i> uses separately; remove <i>mortuary services</i> which will be considered <i>medical services</i> , separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i> ; update <i>salvage and recycling</i> as <i>utilities</i> uses
23.60.670 Permitted uses on upland lots in the UH Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i>
23.60.720 Uses permitted outright on waterfront lots in the UM Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i>
23.60.724 Conditional uses on waterfront lots in the UM Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i>
23.60.728 Prohibited uses on waterfront lots in the UM Environment	Shoreline section change: list <i>animal services</i> uses separately; separate <i>transportation facilities</i> from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update <i>salvage and recycling</i> uses
23.60.730 Permitted uses on upland lots in the UM Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i> ; list <i>animal services</i> uses separately; update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i> , separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update <i>recycling centers</i> to <i>recycling</i>
23.60.780 Uses permitted outright on waterfront lots in the UG Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i> ; list <i>animal services</i> uses separately; update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i> , separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i>
23.60.786 Prohibited principal uses on waterfront lots in the UG Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update <i>transit vehicle bases</i> to <i>bus bases</i> , update <i>salvage and recycling</i> uses.
23.60.788 Permitted uses on upland lots in the UG Environment	Shoreline section change: Identify <i>parking</i> as separate from <i>commercial uses</i> .
23.60.840 Uses permitted outright on waterfront lots in the UI Environment	Shoreline section change: separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update <i>salvage and recycling</i> uses.
23.60.844 Conditional uses on waterfront lots in the UI Environment	Shoreline section change: change <i>personal and household retail sales and services</i> to <i>general sales and services</i> and <i>major durables sales</i> , update term <i>nonhousehold sales and services</i> to <i>heavy sales and services</i>
23.60.848 Principal uses prohibited on waterfront lots in the UI Environment	Shoreline section change: list <i>animal services</i> uses separately, separate <i>transportation facilities</i> and <i>storage</i> uses from <i>commercial uses</i> ; update <i>salvage and recycling</i> uses.

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SMC Code Section	Summary of recommended changes
23.60.850 Permitted uses on upland lots in the UI Environment	Shoreline section change: update <i>salvage and recycling</i> uses.
23.60.900 Definitions generally	Shoreline section change: Update reference to 23.84.
23.60.902 “A.”	Shoreline section change: Identify <i>airports</i> as <i>air transportation facilities</i> ; Change <i>horticultural use</i> to <i>horticulture</i>
23.60.906 “C.”	Shoreline section change: update the list of <i>commercial</i> uses, removing the broad category <i>retail sales and services</i> , update reference under <i>commercial moorage</i> .
23.60.908 “D.”	Shoreline section change: update <i>dry storage of boats</i> to <i>dry boat storage</i>
23.60.918 “I.”	Shoreline section change: update list of <i>institutional</i> uses
23.60.926 “M.”	Shoreline section change: update reference under <i>marina</i> and update <i>marine sales and services</i> uses
23.60.934 “R.”	Shoreline section change: remove category <i>retail sales and services</i> uses (see “C”, above).
23.60.936 “S.”	Shoreline section change: remove category <i>salvage and recycling</i>
23.60.938 “T.”	Shoreline section change: update list of <i>transportation facilities</i>
23.60.940 “U.”	Shoreline section change: update list of <i>utilities</i>

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## Appendix IV: Technical Report on Bulk and Density

Under Seattle's current commercial Land Use Code, Chapter 23.47, residential bulk and density are regulated in two ways.

1. All residential structures in commercial areas are subject to an upper-story lot coverage requirement. The upper-story lot coverage requirement limits the amount of a lot that can be covered by floors above the first floor to 64%. This limit does not apply to the first floor. For example, on a 10,000 square foot lot, the first floor is permitted to be 10,000 square feet but any floor above the first floor can be no larger than 6,400 square feet. This upper-story limit does not apply to non-residential floors, which can cover the entire lot. The upper-story limit can be waived through the design review program. Through design review, a number of buildings have been permitted to have upper stories that cover more than 64% of the lot area, often reaching 75% of lot area, and at least one building permitted to reach 100% lot area coverage.
2. Residential-only buildings in commercial zones have density limits that limit how many units can be built. These density limits are intended to encourage the development of mixed-use buildings (structures with street-level commercial spaces and residential uses). Mixed-use buildings are not subject to any density limits (beyond the limits on the size of the building). The density limits are also set to encourage development within urban villages, with residential-only buildings inside urban villages having higher density limits than residential-only buildings outside of urban villages.

The current set of separate bulk and density limits can be replaced through the use of an FAR limit, which acts as both a bulk and a density limit. The following analysis considers the FAR limits and densities that are both theoretically possible and actually achieved in commercial zones under the current regulation, in order to guide the development of new FAR limits.

### I. Existing Regulations' FAR Equivalents

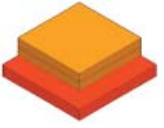
An examination of the 64% limit on residential upper-story lot coverage shows that equivalent FARs can be set. Below are three charts that summarize the FAR equivalent of three different Neighborhood Commercial zones with different height designations. The 30-foot and 40-foot height limit zones allow a 4-foot height bonus for new mixed-use buildings, and a 7-foot bonus for mixed-use buildings with a grocery store. These height allowances are intended to accommodate a taller floor-to-ceiling height at the ground floor, but not to allow additional floors beyond that which may normally be expected to be achieved in these height limits: three stories in a 30-foot zone, four stories in a 40-foot zone.

The diagrams below illustrate different building massings possible under existing, theoretical, and proposed regulations. In most cases, the ground floor is shown as being built to the lot lines. In some circumstances, this would not be allowed, most notably if the project is adjacent to a residential zone. Otherwise, as shown in the diagrams, today's regulations tend to encourage lot-line to lot-line construction of ground floors in Seattle's more urban neighborhoods.

## 30-foot Height Limits

### *NCx-30 Mixed Use Building*

Depending on the height of the ground floor, the floor-floor height of residential floors can equal 10 or 10.5 feet in a mixed-use building in a 30-foot zone. This is equivalent to a 2.28 FAR building.


Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial or Grocery, Access, Parking	13-17'*	1	1	
Residential @ 64% lot coverage	10-10.5' each	2	1.28	
Total	<b>34-37'*</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.28</b>	

\* Includes the 4 or 7 feet bonus available to mixed-use buildings that meet certain standards.

The average built density for mixed-use projects at this height limit was 1.7 FAR, with one third of projects reaching densities of 2.0 or higher, and one project exceeding 2.28 limit by receiving waivers from the upper-level lot coverage limit through the design review process.

### *NCx-30 Commercial-Only Building*


Commercial only buildings, as illustrated in the chart below, have a theoretical maximum FAR of 3 in the 30-foot height limit. However, this theoretical maximum has not been reached over the last ten years. The average FAR for commercial structures built in 30-foot height zones over the last ten years is 0.55, and the highest FAR built under this height limit was a small office building (12,000 square feet) with an FAR of 2.3.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial/Access/Parking etc	10'	1	1	
Office	10' each	2	2	
Total	<b>40'</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	

## 40-foot height limits

### *NCx-40 Mixed Use*

Depending on the height of the ground floor, the floor-floor height of residential floors can range from 9 feet 8 inches to 10 feet 4 inches in a 30-foot zone. Mixed-use buildings in this zone can achieve 2.92 FAR without a without an upper-story lot coverage waiver through design review.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial or Grocery, Access, Parking	13-18'	1	1	
Residential @ 64% lot coverage	9'8" – 10" each	3	1.92	
Total	44-47'	4	2.92	


\* Includes the 4 or 7 feet bonus available to mixed-use buildings that meet certain standards.

The average FAR of mixed-use projects at this height limit was 1.98 FAR. However, at least three projects were able to achieve more than 2.92 FAR because they received waivers from the upper-level setback requirements through the design review process.

### ***NCx-40 Full Commercial***

The diagram below portrays a four-story, lot-line to lot-line commercial building, which could theoretically be built today in a 40-foot height limit. Today, there are no code requirements limiting the bulk of a fully commercial building in the commercial zones, unless located adjacent to a residential zone.


The highest FAR actually built in the 40-foot height limits was a retail/mini-storage building in the Roosevelt neighborhood, at 3.2 FAR. However, most projects are built at much lower densities: this height limit has an average FAR of 0.5, due to the frequency of auto-oriented development at this height limit.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial/Access/Parking etc	10'	1	1	
Office	10' each	3	3	
Total	40'	4	4	

## **65-foot height limits**

### ***NCx-65 Mixed Use***

The residential upper floor count of five stories presumes floor-floor heights of 9.5 to 10.33 feet, depending on the height of the ground floor. This is a fairly common configuration for mixed-use development in the 65-foot height limit; typically the most variable factor is the distribution or massing of the upper-story residential floors. Mixed-use buildings in this zone can generally achieve 4.2 FAR.


Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial, Access, Parking	13-17'	1	1	
Residential @ 64% lot coverage	9.5-10.4' each	5	3.2	
Total	65'	6	4.2	



The average density of mixed-use buildings at this height limit is 2.80 FAR. However, two projects were able to exceed 4.2 FAR through the use of waivers during the design review process. One mixed-use project was able to achieve 5.14 FAR through upper-level waivers.


### ***NCx-65 Full Commercial - Theoretical***

Potentially, a fully-commercial building could be built to 7 FAR in a zone with a 65-foot height limit. However, 6 FAR of offices and 1 FAR of ground floor commercial space within 65 feet is more theoretical than practical. It assumes five office floors with 9-foot floor-to-floor heights. This would result in approximately 8-foot *floor-to-ceiling* heights, very low for Seattle office space and much lower than most Class A office space. This is unlikely to be built in new construction, which given Seattle land prices, vacancy, and lease rates for existing Class A office space, is fairly expensive. A hotel, however, is more likely to be built in this configuration, but only in the NC3, C1, and C2 zones, where they will not be subject to a maximum size of use limitation.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial/Access/Parking etc	11'	1	1	
Office	9' each	6	6	
Total	65'	6	7	

It is more likely that a fully commercial building in a 65-foot zone would have 12- to 13-foot floor-to-floor heights, which would result in a 5-story structure and an FAR of 5, as opposed to the 7 story structure with an FAR of 7 shown above. This is illustrated below.

### ***NCx-65 Full Commercial – Assuming typical office configurations***

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial/Access/Parking etc	13-17'	1	1	
Office	12-13.5' each	4	4	
Total	65'	5	5	

It is possible that a fully commercial building with an FAR equivalent of 5, 6, or 7 could be built today in the 65-foot height limit zones. Out of 65 buildings that were identified as being recently constructed in zones with this height limit, five had FAR's at or above 4.25, and none achieved an FAR higher than 5.1.

### ***30, 40, 65-foot Height Limit Summary***

As the above charts show, assuming that typical floor-to-ceiling heights are used to obtain the expected number of floors within the maximum height allowed, mixed use structures in 30, 40, and 65-foot zones have equivalent FARs of 2.28, 2.92, and 4.2, respectively. The allowed FAR for a commercial-only structure is higher than that of mixed use buildings. This higher FAR is mostly theoretical; in practice, most new buildings


do not reach the theoretical development capacity maximum, but some do, and a few, through creative design and design review waivers exceed the theoretical maximum densities.

## 85, 125, 160-foot Height Limits

Unlike the 30, 40 and 65-foot height limits, commercial zones with height limits greater than 65-feet currently have FAR limits that regulate their density. In these zones there are both maximum limits that apply to a total building, and maximum limits that apply to particular uses. Developers choosing to build to the maximum limit for a building need to mix the uses in the building.

### *NCx-85 Mixed Use*


Buildings meeting mixed-use standards in 85-foot zones, with 64% upper lot coverage, and a 13-foot minimum ground floor height, could theoretically have a maximum FAR of 6.12 if the FAR limits did not apply. This assumes residential floor-floor heights of 9 feet, which is on the low side for new construction. However, structures built in this height limit are currently subject to a maximum FAR of 6, and a lower FAR limit of 4.5 for any single use, including residential, within a mixed use structure.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor: Commercial/Access/Parking etc	13' min	1	1	
Residential @ 56.24% lot coverage	9' each	8	4.5 (max)	
Total	85'	8	<b>5.5</b>	

The above diagram shows a mixed-use structure with an FAR of 5.5. Although an FAR of 6 is allowed, the limit of 4.5 for residential uses means that more than one upper story would have to contain commercial uses up to the equivalent of 0.5 FAR to reach the allowed maximum. In general, small non-street-level commercial spaces are difficult to lease in most places in Seattle. This awkward distribution of commercial space is somewhat unlikely, although not impossible.

### *NC3-85 Full Commercial – with existing 4.5 FAR limit*

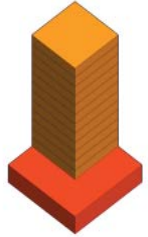
If there were no FAR limits in the 85-foot height limit, a theoretical FAR of 9 would be achievable. In the absence of a limit, it is unlikely a commercial building would be constructed with this high of an FAR. If allowed, a hotel might come close to achieving it. However, under existing rules a 4.5 maximum FAR applies, resulting in a commercial-only building perhaps similar to that illustrated below.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor Commercial/Access/Parking etc. @ 75% lot coverage	15'	1	.75	
Office @ 75% lot coverage	14'	5	3.75	
Total	85'	6	<b>4.5</b>	

The above diagram assumes 5 floors with 14-foot floor-to-floor heights with commercial uses above the ground level to achieve 85 feet within the FAR limit. These taller floor-floor heights portray the types of commercial spaces demanded in new office buildings, although they are on the high side.

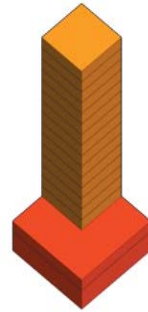
#### ***NC3-125 Mixed Use – with existing 6.0 FAR limit***

In the 85, 125 and 160-foot height limits, both an FAR limit and a 64% upper-story lot coverage limit apply for residential uses. Regardless of the size of the ground floor, to achieve 13 stories in the 125-foot height limit, the footprint of the building must be much smaller than 64% of the lot. The example below shows that with a lot-line to lot-line base, the 12 stories of residential are limited to covering 41.67% of the lot to stay within the FAR limit of 6.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor Commercial/Access/Parking etc	25'	1	1	
Residential @ 41.67% lot coverage	9'-9'4" each	12	5 (max)	
Total	125'	13	<b>6</b>	

#### ***NC3-160 Mixed Use – with existing 7.0 FAR limit***

The 160-foot example below uses a similar configuration, with 15 residential upper stories limited to 33.33% of the lot area, assuming the ground and second floors are commercial and no higher than 25 feet. The maximum FAR in the 160-foot height limit for a mixed-use building is 7, but any single use is limited to a FAR of 5.

Floor Type/Use	Floor to Floor Height	# of Floors	FAR Equivalent	
Ground Floor Commercial/Access/Parking etc	25' total	2	2	
Residential @ 33.33% lot coverage	9' each	15	5 (max)	
Total	160'	17	<b>7</b>	

The existing FAR limits in the 85, 125, and 160-foot height limits are lower for buildings that do not contain a mix of uses (See the “Allowed today” row in the chart of proposed FARs below. Note that there are several exceptions to these rules in the First Hill Urban Village). Those same limits also apply to any one individual use within the building. They essentially allow the same amount of residential density in the 125- and 160-foot height limits, and only 0.5 FAR less residential density in the 85-foot height limit.

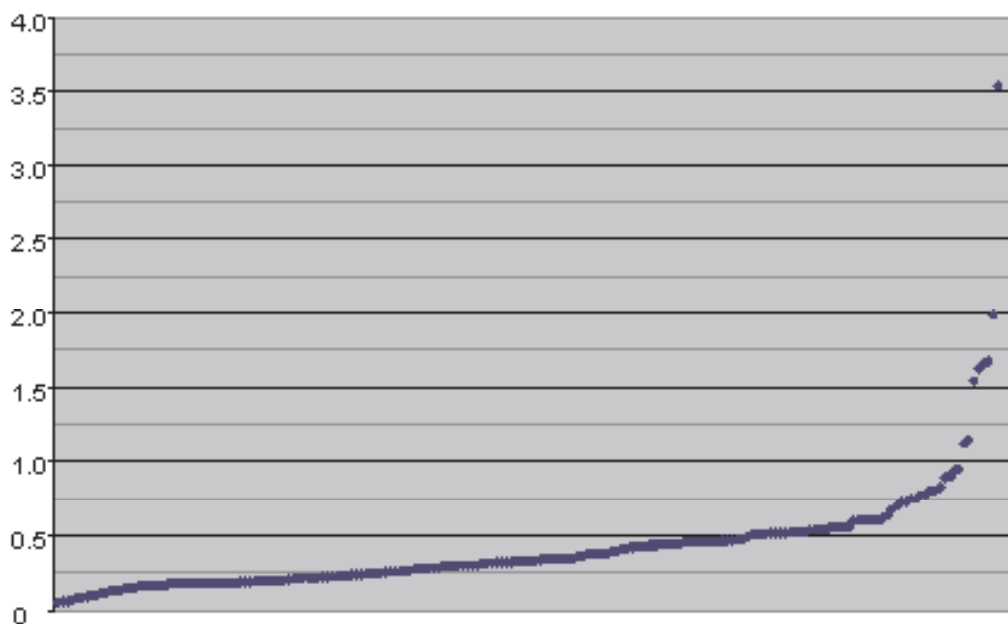
No changes to the existing FAR limits or requirements for ground-floor commercial uses in these taller height limit zones are proposed.

## II. Potential increase in housing on a project-by-project basis

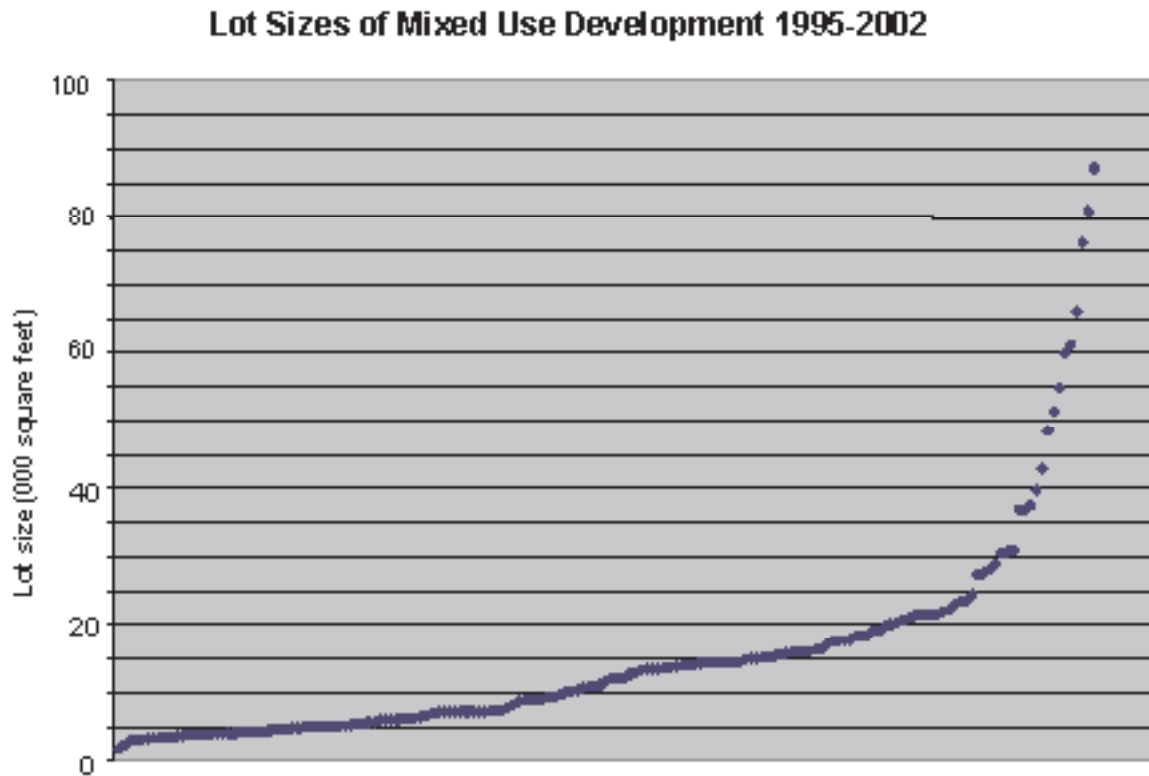
The proposed changes to institute FARs for Commercial zones with 30, 40, and 65-foot height limits, to allow residential uses at ground floor more liberally, and to remove residential density limits for residential-only buildings could theoretically increase housing capacity. However, the maximum potential increase in capacity on any site would not be more than the number of units that can fit in 0.5 FAR. Currently, in order to qualify as a mixed-use building (and not be subject to a residential density limit) a structure needs to have street-level commercial spaces that are on average 30 feet deep and occupy at least 80% of the building's street front. However, there is a 50% cap on the amount of street-level space that is required to be in non-residential uses. This cap is most likely to be met on smaller lots (less than 50 feet by 100 feet, for example) on corners. For mid-block parcels, or those that face only one street, the mixed-use development standards for commercial space equates to an FAR of 0.24, assuming a lot depth of 100 feet. Shallower lots have higher commercial FARs, as the depth of commercial space is the unvarying factor. The mixed-use projects built in the applicable commercial zones (C1, NC1, NC2, NC3) and height limits (30, 40, 65 feet) from 1995 to 2002 had a median commercial FAR of 0.33.

The amount of commercial space that is required by code is different than that provided: sometimes the built amount of space will be much higher than the requirement, and sometimes less, depending on a number of factors: including lot size, lot configuration, and location; development standard departures in Design Review; or simple choices not to meet the mixed-use development standards. Taking a look at the handful of projects developed in the last ten years on sites more than 30,000 square feet in size, the commercial FAR averaged 0.26, with one project at 0.77 and another as low as 0.05 FAR. For the purposes of calculating potential density increases, the median commercial FAR of 0.33 will be used. The following chart shows the commercial FAR for mixed-use projects built from 1995 to 2002.

**Commercial FAR in Mixed-Use Development 1995-2002**



To estimate how many residential units could result if the existing mixed-use provisions are changed, knowing the sizes of lots being developed is helpful. The following chart shows statistics on lot sizes that have been developed since 1995.



**Development in CI, NCI, NC2, NC3 Zones, 1995 - 2002**

Height Limit	Median lot size	Average lot size	Min lot size	Max lot size
<b>30 feet</b>	6,116	12,145	3,605	76,172
40 feet	10,588	13,542	2,306	60,026
65 feet	14,410	18,988	1,779	87,203

Most lots that have been developed since 1995 are between 2,500 square feet to 20,000 square feet in size. Some redevelopment has taken place on very large lots (87,203 square feet is the largest in the study period,) which skews the mean lot size and makes the median a more meaningful average. These very large projects are not common. In general, most of the mixed-use projects built since 1995 have been on lots smaller than 20,000 square feet. The average and median lot sizes tend to increase as the height limit goes up.

Examining the potential increase in residential units if the commercial portion of a constructed mixed-use building was instead residential among a variety of lot sizes, demonstrates the potential increase in commercial space as a result of the proposals. The commercial square footage and number of units built was found for individual projects built on similar-sized lots. The existing commercial square footage, and a theoretical square footage derived from assuming the median commercial FAR of 0.33 were both multiplied by 70% to

account for circulation (residential spaces need more walls, hallways, and ingress/egress than do commercial spaces). These numbers were then divided by an apartment size of 750 square feet (just under the average size reported in *The Apartment Vacancy Report*, Vol. 22, No 2 October 2004, Dupre + Scott Apartment Advisors, Inc. among apartments built in 1994 or later) to yield the number of units that could theoretically fit in the commercial spaces. If the space left over was at least 550 square feet, an additional unit was added. These unit counts were divided by the total units for the project to determine the percentage unit increase (see last two columns, below).

#### Sample Mixed-Use Projects

Zoning	Lot size ft <sup>2</sup>	Commercial ft <sup>2</sup> built	Commercial FAR	# Units built	# Potential Unit Increase*	% Potential Unit Increase
NC2-40	2,981	576	0.19	4	0	0%
NC2-30	5,000	664	0.13	8	0	0%
NC3-65	9,988	1,875	0.19	30	2	7%
NC1-30	15,002	4,500	0.30	23	4	17%
C1-65	20,345	6,449	0.32	94	6	6%
NC2-40	30,405	17,000	0.56	78	16	21%
		Average	<b>0.28</b>		8%	<b>8%</b>
		Median	<b>0.25</b>		5%	<b>5%</b>

\* Number of potential additional units if commercial space was built as residential space, assuming 30% circulation (for walls, hallways, etc.), an average unit size of 750 square feet, and a minimum unit size of 550 square feet.

These calculations resulted in a few findings of note. First, despite the fact mixed-use development standards for ground-level commercial spaces should theoretically result in higher FARs for commercial spaces on smaller lots, this sample of projects shows the opposite. However, looking more broadly at all the mixed-use projects built from 1995-2002, often smaller lots do have higher commercial FARs and larger lots have smaller FARs; but again, there are so many factors involved that it is difficult to determine a definitive pattern of FAR-to-lot sizes. This broader set of data does tell us that it is acceptable to assume a commercial FAR between 0.24 and 0.5 for most mixed-use projects (see chart showing commercial FARs for 1995-2002 projects above).

Second, the total and percentage increase in units on a project-by-project basis is highly dependent on the allowed height limit of the lot in question. Larger percentage increases would be possible in lower-height zones, but development in these zones also tends to occur on smaller lots, lowering the potential number of units that could be added. The smaller lots are so small that the average commercial space at lower height limits is smaller than the average apartment size of 750 square feet. Adding in circulation space, these spaces might fit a small studio apartment. The average unit increase for these sample projects ranged between 0% for the small projects up to 19% for the NC2-40 project on the 30,000 square foot lot, with an average unit increase for all lot sizes of 8%.

To check against this methodology, the same calculations were made for all the C1, NC1, NC2, and NC3 mixed-use projects built from 1995-2002 in the 30, 40, and 65-foot height limits. If all the commercial space that was built had instead been residential, the total increase in residential units would be 15%. If those same projects all had the median commercial FAR of 0.33, the increase in units would be 14%. Both calculations



assume the same 30% reduction for circulation and an average unit size of 750 square feet. This means we could assume that the maximum residential capacity increase for the proposed changes if all new mixed-use projects became fully residential is about 15%.

III. Estimating the likelihood of project types

The more difficult question is exactly how many new developments might be fully residential, fully commercial, or mixed-use with residential. Currently, any of these three are allowed to occur in C1, NC1, NC2, and NC3 zones, although fully residential projects are discouraged.

The City’s Development Capacity Model estimates commercial and residential capacity based on assumptions about what percentage projects might be residential or commercial, although it does not include mixed use. This works for estimating the total future commercial and residential capacity of redevelopable lots in Seattle under the current zoning, but is less reliable when trying to estimate how a change in the current zoning might affect how many more projects might be fully residential instead of mixed use.

We could look to the existing NC/R zones for hints. The Development Capacity Model assumes that 75% of the projects in NC/R zones will develop as fully residential; and that 30-50% of the projects in existing NC zones will primarily be residential, depending on the height limit. More recent project activity in the NC/R zones might help, except only four were built in the study period. One was fully residential, two were fully commercial, and one was mixed-use; this is not enough data to base new assumptions on. Among all the commercial zones and height limits, the total percentage of fully residential projects built from 1995-2002 was 7%. 52% of projects were fully commercial, and 41% were mixed-use. In other words, about half the projects were commercial and about half had a residential component.

All projects built in commercial zones, 1995-2002

	Percent of total projects
Fully Residential (Apartments, condos)	7%
Mixed Use (Commercial and residential)	41%
Fully Commercial (Stores, offices)	52%

Among zones with more projects (greater than 30 over the study period), the highest percentage of fully residential projects was the C1-40 zone, with 21%. The lowest was NC2-40, where only 1% of projects were fully residential. Given the general locations of NC2-40 and C1-40 zones and C1’s more auto-oriented nature, this may initially seem counter-intuitive. However, NC2 zones are usually mapped in the middle of neighborhoods and urban villages, and comprise a large portion of Seattle’s mixed-use business districts. C1 is often mapped along high-capacity arterials, but also in more marginal locations, where there may not be as strong of a market for commercial uses.

The Development Capacity Model’s estimates of future capacity and development assume the same densities for both NC/R and NC development, instead relying on the likelihood of residential versus commercial to attain total capacity figures. Among projects built in the applicable zones and height limits, the average densities were lower than the density assumptions the model uses. Several were close: the achieved densities in the 65-foot zones were only 5-9% lower than the assumption. In the other height limits, differences ranged

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from 9% to 89% lower, with the median difference 22% lower. This might indicate that as far as recent development and residential capacity is concerned, the changes proposed to more freely allow residential uses at ground level might result in housing densities closer (15% more, as shown above) to what the model estimates for future development.

Local market conditions and the zoning, size, configuration, and location of the site in question are really the only potential indicators of project types in the future. The residential market is generally known to be very strong, particularly having survived a major economic decline. The commercial market is known to be both highly dynamic and fickle. It's not a new assumption, but we can predict that more projects that are currently developed as mixed-use might be fully residential, and that the percentage of fully commercial projects will probably stay the same.



## Appendix V: Comparison of Cities' Parking Requirements

In 2004, DPD hired Adolfson Associates, Inc. to survey a number of other cities, in order to compare Seattle's current and proposed parking requirements with the requirements of comparable cities. In all ten Cities were surveyed. Because parking requirements for all Cities are associated with the types of uses that are regulated in those cities, and because there is a wide variety of different uses that Cities regulate, some Cities do not have parking requirements that are comparable with Seattle's requirements. Seattle's current requirements are generally at the middle of the requirements for all Cities surveyed, with some requirements being higher than the median requirement. Seattle's proposed requirements are at the low end of all Cities' requirements, but are within the range of parking requirements seen.

Use Category	Seattle, WA		Portland, OR
	Current	Proposed	Floor area
Sales and service, General	1 per 350 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>	Retail, personal services: 1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>
Sales and service, Heavy	1 per 2000 ft <sup>2</sup>	No Change	Not specifically listed
Eating and drinking establishments	1 per 200 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 250 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 250 ft <sup>2</sup>
Lodging	Hotel: 1 per 4 rooms; Motel: 1 per 1 room	1 per 4 rooms	Temporary lodging: 1 per rentable room; for associated uses such as restaurants see above.
Entertainment	1 per 8 fixed seats or 1 per 100 ft <sup>2</sup> of public assembly area not containing fixed seats	No change	Theaters: 1 per 4 seats or 1 per 6 feet of bench area.; Major event entertainment: 1 per 8 seats or per CU review.
Sales and service, Automotive	1 per 2000 ft <sup>2</sup> 1 per 350 ft <sup>2</sup> for parts sales	1 per 2000 ft <sup>2</sup>	Quick vehicle service: 1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup> ; Vehicle repair: 1 per 750 ft <sup>2</sup>
Animal shelters and kennels	1 per 2000 ft <sup>2</sup>	No change	Not specifically listed
Office	1 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>	No change	1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>
Medical Services	1 per 350 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>
Laboratories, research, and development	1 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> ; 1 per 1500 ft <sup>2</sup> in South Lake Union	1 per 1500 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>
Food processing and craft work	1 per 2000 ft <sup>2</sup>	No change	Manufacturing and production: 1 per 750 ft <sup>2</sup>
Multifamily (basic requirement)	1.1 per unit to 1.5 per unit	1 per unit	1 per unit

	San Diego, CA	Denver, CO	Minneapolis, MN
Use Category	Floor area	Gross floor area	Gross floor area
Sales and service, General	1.0, 1.25, 2.5, or 5.0 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> Depending on zone.	1 per 200 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> in excess of 4,000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Sales and service, Heavy	1.0, 1.25, 2.5, or 5.0 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> depending on zone.	1 per 200 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> in excess of 4,000 ft <sup>2</sup> .
Eating and drinking establishments	1.0, 1.25, 2.5, 5.0, or 15.0 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> depending on zone.	1 per 200 ft <sup>2</sup>	Parking equal to 30% of capacity
Lodging	Visitor accommodations: 1 per room; 10 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> conference area.	Hotel/Motel: 1 per 600 ft <sup>2</sup>	Hotel: 1 per 3 guest rooms + parking equal to 30% of the capacity of persons for affiliated uses (e.g. dining, meeting rooms)
Entertainment	Theater: 1-3 screens: 1 per 3 seats; 4+screens: 1 per 3.3 seats; 50 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> if not fixed seats. Other public assembly and entertainment: 1 per 3 seats; 30 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> if not fixed seats.	1 per 200 ft <sup>2</sup>	Theater: Parking equal to 30% of capacity of persons in the auditorium Sports arena: 30% of capacity.
Sales and service, Automotive	Repair and maintenance: 5.0 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> ; Sales & rentals: 1 per each 10 display cars.	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup>	Auto repair: 1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> excluding service bays + 2 spaces per service bay. Auto sales: 1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> in excess of 4000 ft <sup>2</sup> + 1 per 2000 ft <sup>2</sup> of outdoor sales
Animal shelters and kennels	Veterinary clinics and hospitals: 2.5 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> in excess of 4,000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Office	Business & professional government: 3.3 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> in excess of 4000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Medical Services	Medical, dental and health practitioners: 4.0 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup>	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup>
Laboratories, research, and development	Research & development: 2.5 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>	One-fourth (1/4) the gross floor area	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> in excess of 4000 ft <sup>2</sup>

	San Diego, CA	Denver, CO	Minneapolis, MN
Use Category	Floor area	Gross floor area	Gross floor area
Food processing and craft work	Light manufacturing: 2.5 per 100 ft <sup>2</sup>	Parking area equal to one-fourth (1/4) the gross floor.	1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup> in excess of 4000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Multifamily (basic requirement)	1.25 to 2.25 per unit	1 per unit to 1.5 per unit	1 per unit

	Cleveland, OH	Oakland, CA
Use Category	Gross floor area	Floor area
Sales and service, General	General Retail: 1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup> Supermarkets: 1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup> to 1 per 150 ft <sup>2</sup> Dept. store: > 200,000 ft <sup>2</sup> - 1 per 300 ft <sup>2</sup>	General retail sales, general personal service: 1 per 400, 600, or 900 ft <sup>2</sup> depending on zone.
Sales and service, Heavy	For establishments having less than 2,000 square feet of gross floor area, one for each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. For establishments having 2,000 square feet of gross floor area or more, one for each 700 square feet of gross floor area.	General retail sales, whenever sales are primarily of bulky merchandise: 1 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup> Retail business supply: 1 per 600 ft <sup>2</sup>
Eating and drinking establishments	1 per employee + 1 per 100 ft <sup>2</sup> floor area devoted to patron use or 1 per 4 seats based on max. seating capacity, whichever is greater.	Fast food restaurant: 1 per 200 ft <sup>2</sup> some zones vary.
Lodging	Hotels: 1 per each dwelling unit, + 1 for each 4 guest rooms, + 1 per each three employees.; Motels and tourist homes: 1 per each guest room, + 1 for each 2 employees.	Motel: 1 per room.; Hotel: 1 per 2 rooms or 1 per or 3 rooms (depending on zone)
Entertainment	Indoor amusement or recreation uses: 1 per 6 seats or 3x GFA, whichever is greater. Outdoor amusement or recreation uses: 2x the lot area devoted to such use	Group Assembly: 1 per 8 seats with fixed seats, + 1 per 80 ft <sup>2</sup> without fixed seats, + a number of spaces prescribed by Director of City Planning for outdoor assembly areas, some zones have variations.
Sales and service, Automotive	Repair and service: 1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup> ; Used motor vehicle lot: 25% of gross lot area	Automotive servicing, automotive repair and cleaning, automotive fee parking: 1 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Animal shelters and kennels	Not specifically listed	Animal care: 1 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>



	Cleveland, OH	Oakland, CA
Use Category	Gross floor area	Floor area
Office	Government, professional office: 1 per 500 ft <sup>2</sup> ;	Consultative and financial service, administrative, business and communication service: 1 per 600 ft <sup>2</sup> Specific zones may decrease parking req.
Medical Services	5 per each doctor or dentist + 1 per 2 employees or 1 per 150 ft <sup>2</sup> whichever is greater.	General retail sales, general personal service: 1 per 400, 600, or 900 ft <sup>2</sup> depending on zone.
Laboratories, research, and development	Not specifically listed	Research service: 1 per 600 ft <sup>2</sup> Specific zones may decrease parking req.
Food processing and craft work	Other permitted industrial uses: 1 per 3 employees or parking area 25% of GFA.	Manufacturing activities: 1 per 1,500 ft <sup>2</sup> or 1 per 3 employees, whichever is more.
Multifamily (basic requirement)	1 per unit	1 per unit

	Vancouver, BC	Tacoma, WA	Bellevue, WA
Use Category	Gross floor area (square meters)	Gross square area	Net floor area
Sales and service, General	Retail uses: 1 per 100 m <sup>2</sup> up to 300 m <sup>2</sup> , + 1 per each additional 50 m <sup>2</sup> .	> 15,000 sq. ft.: 2.5 per 1,000 sq. ft.	0-15,000 sq. ft.: 5 per 1000 sq. ft.; 15,000-600,000 sq. ft.: 4 per 1000 sq. ft.; >600,000 sq. ft.: 5 per 1000 sq. ft.
Sales and service, Heavy	Not specifically listed	Shopping center and retail commercial: 4 per 1000 sq. ft.	Home furnishing-retail and major appliance-retail: 1.5 per 1000 sq. ft.
Eating and drinking establishments	Restaurants: 1 per 50 m <sup>2</sup> up to 100 m <sup>2</sup> , 1 per additional 10 m <sup>2</sup> up to 500 m <sup>2</sup> , + 1 additional 20 m <sup>2</sup> over 500 sm.; Cabaret, licensed for the sale of liquor: 1 per 9.3 sm.; Neighborhood public house, licensed for the sale of liquor: 1 per 18.6 m <sup>2</sup> (ratios vary in some districts)	10 per 1000 sq. ft.	Restaurant (sit down): 14 per 1000 sq. ft.; Restaurant takeout service): 16 per 1000 sq. ft.

	Vancouver, BC	Tacoma, WA	Bellevue, WA
Use Category	Gross floor area (square meters)	Gross square area	Net floor area
Lodging	Hotel: 1 per dwelling unit + 1 per 2 sleeping or housekeeping unit.	Hotel: 0.5 per room.; Motel: 1 per room.	Hotel/motel basic guest and employee: 0.9 per guest room.; restaurant/bar/lounge: 10 per 1000 sf seating area.; Banquet/meeting rooms: 6 per 1000 seating area
Entertainment	Theatre, auditorium, casino: 1 per 9.3 m <sup>2</sup> used for assembly purposes.; Stadium, arena, exhibition hall or similar place with spectator facilities: 1 per 5 seats, or 1 per 9.3 m <sup>2</sup> for assembly purposes, whichever is the greater.	Auditoriums, stadiums, and theaters: .25 per seat.; Non-listed recreation: same as retail, based on size	Auditorium / assembly room / exhibition hall / theater / commercial recreation: 1 per 4 fixed seats or 10 per 1000 where no fixed seats. where no fixed seats.
Sales and service, Automotive	Motor Vehicle Repair Shop: 1 per 100 m <sup>2</sup> in the building or 1 per 5 five employees on a maximum work shift, whichever is greater.	Not specifically listed	Not specifically listed
Animal shelters and kennels	Animal clinic: 1 per 28 m <sup>2</sup>	Not specifically listed	Not specifically listed
Office	Office Uses and Retail Uses: 1 per 100 m <sup>2</sup> up to 300 m <sup>2</sup> , + 1 additional per each additional 50 sm.;	3 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>	4 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Medical Services	1 per 28 m <sup>2</sup>	3 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>	4.5 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Laboratories, research, and development	Laboratory: 1 per 100 m <sup>2</sup> in the building or 1 per 5 five employees on a maximum work shift, whichever is greater.	Not specifically listed	4 per 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Food processing and craft work	Manufacturing Uses, Office uses, Laboratory, Production or Rehearsal Studio, Utility and Communication Uses, Transportation and Storage Uses, Wholesale Uses; Work Shop: 1 per 57.5 m <sup>2</sup>	Industrial/manufacturing: 1.5 per 1000 sq. ft.	High tech. / industry: 4 per 1000 sq. ft.; Manufacturing / assembly: 1.5 per 1000 where no fixed seats.
Multifamily (basic requirement)	1 per 70 m <sup>2</sup>	1 per unit	1.2 to 1.8 per unit



For more information on the Neighborhood Business District Strategy go to the website at [www.seattle.gov/dpd/planning/nbds](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/planning/nbds) or contact Lish Whitson, DPD Planner, at (206)233-0079 or [nbds@seattle.gov](mailto:nbds@seattle.gov).

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